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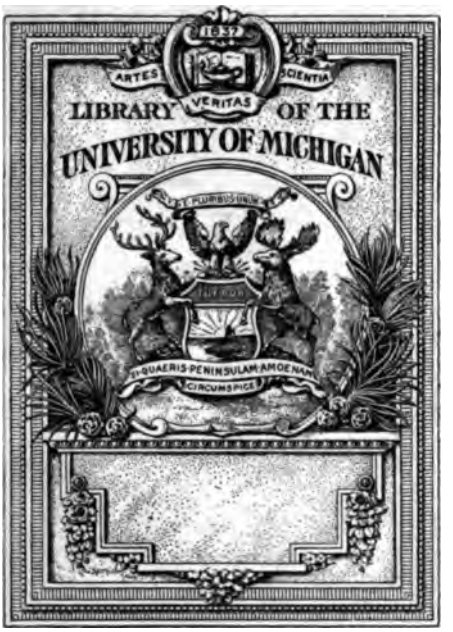
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INDIVIDUALISM

FOUR LECTURES ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS FOR SOCIAL RELATIONS

BY

WARNER FITE, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN INDIANA UNIVERSITY

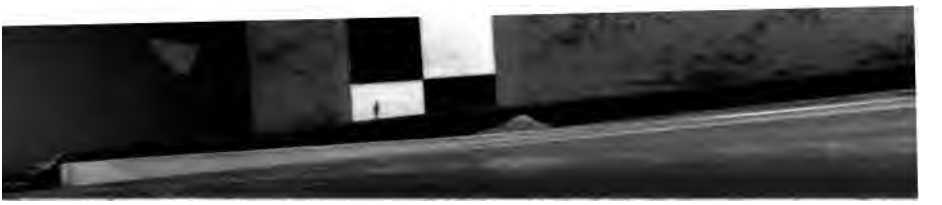
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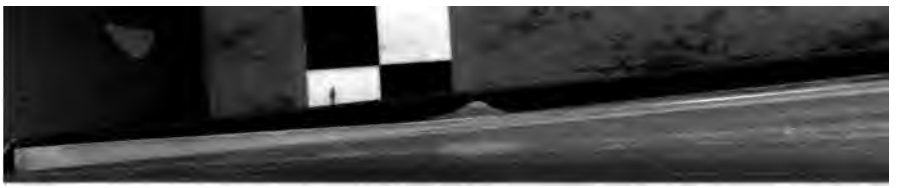
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To

CHARLES MATHEWS STURGES

AS A TOKEN OF AFFECTION
AND RESPECT





PREFACE

THE four "lectures" forming this series were part of the program of public lectures given at the University of Chicago in the Summer of 1909. They were prepared for that purpose, yet at the same time, in practically their present dimensions, for publication in book-form. In revising them I have purposely retained the form of lecture because, in the statement of a point of view so avowedly personal and addressed so frequently to the individual experience of the reader, I wished to remain on terms of familiar intercourse. Nothing has been really added in the revision except the divisions I and II of the Third Lecture. The first of these additions is somewhat technical in character, but, for the student of philosophy at least, the points treated there are too important to be omitted. In the second I have embodied a formal statement of the ethical doctrine, and the reader who, like myself, wishes to know the outcome of a book before engaging to read it may find this to his purpose. He will also find a full analysis of the argument in the table of contents.

In the Third Lecture I have developed the ethical doctrine through a sharp criticism of the view of my friend, Professor Dewey. I wrote Professor Dewey of my intention, and I wish to express my appreciation of his cordial response, and at the same time to record my many positive obligations to him, both intellectual — as the text will show — and personal. The criticism in question also includes Professor Royce, to whose

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lectures on "The World and the Individual" I am indebted for probably more suggestions than I can distinctly account for. It is part of my individualism to hold that one may be both warmly appreciative and independently critical. The criticism is embodied in the text; the appreciation, not less sincere, I wish to record here.

To state a clear difference of opinion is less embarrassing, however, than to define one's relations to those standing for a somewhat similar view. So far as I am aware no one has appropriated my special brand of individualism nor made quite the same use of the conception of consciousness. But it would be unjust not to recall Professor L. F. Ward's "Psychic Factors of Civilization" or, in a work on the significance of consciousness for social relations, to ignore Professor C. H. Cooley's "Human Nature and the Social Order" and "Social Organization." The last of these reached me too late, unfortunately, to claim the author's support, or partial support, for the conception of social consciousness developed in the text.

My thanks are due to my friends and colleagues, Professor C. J. Sembower and Professor Frank Aydelotte, who have very kindly read the manuscript and helped me out of a number of obscurities.



CONTENTS

LECTURE I

THE CONCEPTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL

I INTRODUCTION 3

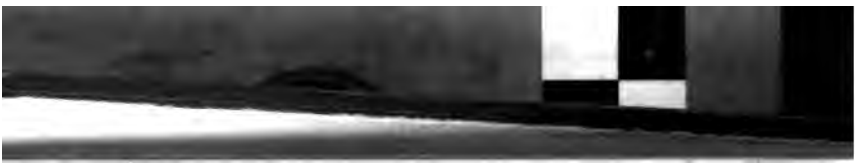
§ 1. The purpose of the lectures is to develop the conception of the individual and the importance of the individual in the world. Their occasion is to be found in the prevailing exaggeration of the social and depreciation of the individual. § 2. The theses are: first, that the individual as a conscious agent is the source and measure of all value; secondly, that the interests of conscious individuals are essentially harmonious; thirdly, however, only so far as they are conscious. Hence, two main theses: the significance of the individual and the significance of consciousness.

II THE TWO CONCEPTIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL 7

§ 3. The human individual has two contrasted aspects, the external aspect, as he appears to others, the internal aspect, as he appears to himself. § 4. In the first aspect he is the mechanical individual, the individual seen in the cold light of science, as such a material object in space and time, whose movements are determined by the operation of cause, or mechanical force. § 5. For himself, however, in his internal aspect, his actions are never the effect of a cause but the expression of a reason. § 6. Hence, the conscious individual is defined by the meaning of the world for him and the purpose which he seeks to accomplish there, — which meaning is necessarily his own meaning. § 7. The two individuals are not coextensive.

III THE MECHANICAL SOCIAL ORDER 16

§ 8. Mechanical individuals are as such mutually exclusive. § 9. Which means that each one's consumption of goods reduces the quantity consumable by the others. § 10. And therefore that their "interests" are mutually hostile. § 11. Against this it may be urged that human individuals, even as mechanical facts, are highly adjustable; but apart from conscious control nothing is adjustable. § 12. The mechanical individual is the presupposition of the



so-called laws of human conduct. § 13. Those holding this conception may be interested in social reform; but their attitude means that the reform is to be effected by themselves, not by the individuals reformed. § 14. And their only possible aim is, not a unity of interests, but a stable equilibrium based upon mutual sacrifice. § 15. Hence, the mechanical ideal of social order is an equilibrium of forces, which may be regarded as socialistic or individualistic, without, however, altering the facts.

IV The Idealistic Social Order 25

§ 16. Idealistic theories affirm generally that the interests of individuals are essentially in harmony, but without deriving this from any "essential" attribute of the individual; the essential attribute required by the logic of idealism is consciousness. § 17. The ends of a conscious individual must, in last analysis, be always his own; but any conflict of ends between individuals presupposes, not purposes, but blind demands for mechanical possession, involving temporal and spatial displacement. § 18. But suppose that ends do conflict? Then, as conscious ends, the conflict may be removed by adjustment. § 19. Self-adjustability is implied in the very idea of a conscious as distinct from a merely mechanical being; the inevitableness of mechanical action presupposes unconsciousness. § 20. In social relations the possibilities of adjustment are enormously increased through communication. § 21. Of a case of actual conflict it may always be said that the purposes in question are not fully self-conscious. . § 22. Hence, the essential harmony of interests presupposes, not a preestablished harmony of instincts, but the fact that the individuals, as conscious, know each other. § 23. Which common sense expresses by saying that between intelligent men there should be no real ground for dispute. § 24. The spiritual or the merely mechanical character of the harmony will be a question of the fineness and richness of the individual interests thus adjusted.

V The Two Conceptions of Nature 41

§ 25. Every social adjustment involves a transaction with Nature, and thus raises the question whether Nature can be controlled. § 26. For the mechanical view there should be no possibility of control; yet a certain measure of control is commonly assumed, decreasing toward a limit fixed by "Nature's scanty supply," as expressed in the law of diminishing returns. § 27. This ultimate scarcity is presupposed in the ultimate incompatibility of individual interests. § 28. And the view of Nature as a determinately fixed fact fulfils the logic of the mechanical theory. § 29. Over against this is set a law of increasing returns due to



cooperation; but the possible increase of returns is commonly assumed to be limited. § 30. In the logic of idealism the law is valid without limit for the cooperation of conscious agents; any actual limit means that the combination of activities is not fully self-conscious. § 31. Hence, for idealism Nature is not a fixed fact but an indefinitely elastic fact. This is presupposed in the essential harmony of interests. § 32. And is in accord with idealistic metaphysics generally. § 33. It is also supported by the actual history of civilization. § 34. Which of these two views is true? The next lecture is to show that both are true, each as the obverse of the other. § 35. Which means that, since we are not limited to the alternatives of self-interest and social welfare, self-sacrifice is not a valid moral ideal.

LECTURE II

THE INDIVIDUAL AS A CONSCIOUS AGENT

I The Conception of Consciousness 55

§ 36. Consciousness may be defined as many *and* one in contrast to material things which are many *or* one. § 37. Coexistent material things, such as billiard-balls, have to be mutually exclusive; the reality of the corresponding ideas is their meaning, which involves both mutual inclusiveness and individual distinctness. § 38. The successive terms of a mechanical process are mutually exclusive, each being determined solely by the present force; a conscious activity is determined at each moment by present, past, and future. § 39. Hence, what is paradoxical for physical science — to be both here and there, now and then, — is for consciousness a necessity of its being. § 40. The separate mental states of empirical psychology are due to a mechanical metaphor; the states of a conscious being must include each other. § 41. So of his several aims; a conscious being cannot be a bundle of instincts. § 42. Consciousness involves selection, but not selection by rejection; the measure of consciousness is the extent to which all the ends are realized, each distinctly, yet all at once. § 43. Which is also the measure of personality; for it is consciousness that makes one the same person. § 44. On the basis of this definition we are very imperfectly conscious.

II The Degrees of Consciousness 70

§ 45. According to our definition there is no distinction between consciousness and self-consciousness except as a matter of degree. § 46. The higher degree of consciousness is indicated by the broader



range of comparison, or more and one. § 47. This involves a superior "clearness." § 48. The different degrees of consciousness in man and animals are differences in the range of comparison of the present thought. § 49. Likewise the different degrees of culture among men; common opinion to the contrary, the more cultivated man is more intensely conscious, even of the world just before him. § 50. Yet still very imperfectly conscious; hence all human consciousness is more or less a series of relatively exclusive states.

III The Conscious Individual 80

§ 51. The life of the unthinking man is determined by present conditions, the absence of thought excluding a reference to ends beyond. § 52. It is thus determined by natural law, which, in physics or economics, presupposes an unconscious subject. § 53. With the increase of consciousness past and future aims are brought into action; the present act is then individuated to satisfy, not a common good, but the system of goods representing all the aims of the agent in question. § 54. Which system is more individual to the extent that the self-consciousness is comprehensive and inclusive. § 55. This principle has several corollaries: first, the appearance of consciousness upon the scene means that a new and original force is inserted into the economy of the world, with revolutionary effect. § 56. Secondly, this new force is in the form of a personal activity radiating from yourself as its heart and center. § 57. Thirdly, through this self-consciousness you become a free agent and superior to natural law. § 58. And fourthly, an end in and for yourself. § 59. And as an end for yourself, not a means for the ends of others, whether of society, or Nature, or God. § 60. As illustrated by the so-called race-suicide. § 61. The unity of the conscious individual is not the unity of the melting-pot, nor the hierarchical unity of the stock-corporation, as implied in the functional theory of consciousness; only that life is truly conscious which is illumined throughout by the direct presence of the whole personal self. § 62. Which is illustrated by the mental attitude involved in the creation or appreciation of a work of art; here it is clear that individuality is intensified by self-expansion.

IV The Conception of Social Consciousness 98

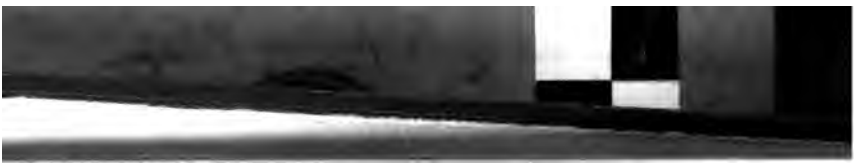
§ 63. It is commonly assumed that a group of conscious individuals constitutes as such a conscious society; but any relation between individuals as conscious must be a consciousness of relation. § 64. As the consciousness of the individual involves the unity and distinctness of his several aims, so a conscious society is constituted by mutual understanding and individual distinct-



ness, through intercommunication. § 65. Through this process the individual reaches a clearer definition of himself; yet the individual is not the product of the social order, nor a term in an exclusively social situation. § 66. Nor does the "social personality" of any group diminish the individuality or personal importance of its members. § 67. Increase of social consciousness involves the formation of personal relations covering a wider range. § 68. Which, in last analysis, gives the meaning of the process of civilization. § 69. Over against the social consciousness there is a social unconsciousness, illustrated, at its extreme, in the mutual indifference of the members of an animal herd. § 70. Which is not specially noticeable in the smaller human groups, but characteristic of the larger, such as the nation. § 71. But this narrowness of personal sympathies is more or less counteracted by the higher culture, through which men of distant times and places are brought into personal relations.

V The Conscious Society 111

§ 72. The practical result of social consciousness, as here defined, is social harmony and individual freedom; mutual hostility and repression are due to social unconsciousness. § 73. The latter is illustrated in the mob, a state of mutual unconsciousness, in which the relations of men are precisely those of the billiard-balls on the table. § 74. It is illustrated also in present economic relations, and serves to explain the conflict of economic interests. § 75. Also the operation of impersonal economic laws. § 76. To the argument that civilization has only made brutality more refined it may be replied that, through the increase of self-consciousness, even war is made a more logical and mutually serviceable activity. § 77. The best illustrations of the thesis are given by the distinctively personal relations, which include those formed through literature and art. § 78. Here it is shown that independence of thought and character, so far from involving an invidious distinction, are indispensable for any truly social life. § 79. The personal relation involves: first, that your fellow by his difference opens the way to a larger expansion of self; secondly, that he furnishes the basis of contrast by means of which you find yourself; yet, thirdly, not as a mere means for you as end, but, so far as he is a genuine personality, as a coordinate end. § 80. This view of the situation, while furnishing no ground for an undiscriminating optimism, should, however, strengthen and justify our faith in the intellectual life.



LECTURE III

INDIVIDUALITY AND SOCIAL UNITY

I The Evolution of the Individual 135

§ 81. In eighteenth-century thought the individual is the prior cause of society; in later thought the relation is reversed. § 82. So of the development of character in the individual; for the earlier view the egoistic, for the later the social impulses are prior. § 83. The later view is exemplified in the "Ethics" of Dewey and Tufts, according to whom the history of moral ideas shows a development toward individuality, but chiefly, it seems, for the better attainment of a common good. § 84. And the harmony of interests is possible only because the desires of the individual are intrinsically "social," or altruistic; though "social" is also defined as "objective" or "disinterested." § 85. Virtue consists, then, in losing yourself in disinterested ends. § 86. The view is an expression of a historic tendency of thought to conceive the world-process as a return to an original unity, from which the individualism of modern life constitutes a decadent aberration. § 87. Argument against the view: for a conscious being the criterion of value is not natural impulse but impulse enlightened and sophisticated. § 88. That the child knows others before he knows himself rests upon the "psychological fallacy" of supposing the child to have the same consciousness of his situation that we should have; knowledge of self and of others is necessarily coordinate. § 89. The imitation-theory fails to distinguish between conscious and unconscious imitation; conscious imitation is always the expression of personal choice. § 90. Likewise conscious heredity; the hereditary impulse become conscious constitutes a new and original force, and hereditary tendencies toward the common good are reorganized for the individual good. § 91. The same criticism applies to the primitive disinterestedness of desire; an infant consciously grasping an object must know himself as well as the object. § 92. And the distinction still holds if self is defined as the body. § 93. The principle of finding yourself to lose yourself again is self-contradictory; and the popular condemnation of "self-consciousness" rests upon a misconception. § 94. The superior sociality of primitive life is another case of the psychological fallacy; all that is indicated is a lack of individual distinction. § 95. The whole argument for the priority of the social rests upon a confusion of "associated" activities with "disinterested."

II The Formal Principles of Individualism 170

§ 96. In contrast to the view under criticism, the theory of individualism stands for the following: First, by nature, in the



brute sense of the term, men are to be conceived neither as self-regarding nor as social-regarding, but as impersonal mechanical facts. § 97. Secondly, so far as the individual becomes self-conscious he becomes never less self-regarding but more so. § 98. But, thirdly, the same knowledge that reveals himself shows him to be living in a world with others whose conduct determines for him the conditions through which his own interests are to be satisfied, and whose interests must therefore be considered. § 99. Fourthly, the only method of harmonizing these interests is by technical adjustment of activities and conditions, which, as against Dewey, satisfies the demands both of logic and morality. § 100. As against Tufts, individualism holds that selfishness is ennobled in becoming deliberate and intelligent. What individualism stands for is: intelligent self-assertion.

III Justice and Brotherly Love 183

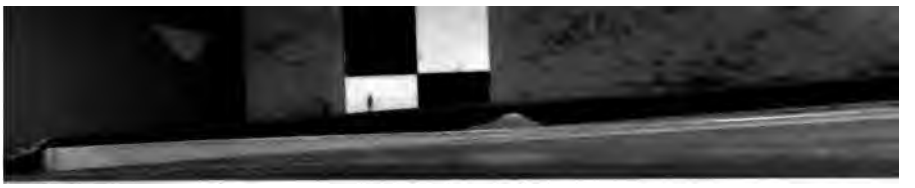
§ 101. What conception of social unity appeals to us as ideally good or beautiful? The two conceptions prominent in modern European thought are justice and love, the first an inheritance from the Greeks, the second from the Hebrews through the Christian Church. § 102. The latter, typically oriental, stands for humility and self-sacrifice, and aims to efface all individual differences in a unity of personal feeling. § 103. The Greek conception stands for self-respect and social justice; it emphasizes knowledge and its ideal is a unity which fulfils the variety of individual interests. § 104. The Christian ideal rests upon the idea of the family, the Greek upon that of the state, or of an association or club; and in modern life the one is a Sunday, the other a week-day ideal. § 105. Now the ideal of individualism is justice, yet not excluding love; justice is the test of love and love the refinement of justice. § 106. The contrast of love and justice has two aspects: first, mysticism *versus* realism. Mysticism calls the absence of distinction reality, hence the absence of individual distinction love. § 107. Christianity and communism are alike mystical, likewise socialism when it stands for a communism of productive activity. § 108. But the absence of distinction is not reality but just nothing, absence of property-distinction may be only indifference, and absence of free competition mere inactivity. § 109. And the social problem is not of the obliteration of differences but of their free coordination. § 110. The family ideal presupposes both coordination and freedom, the conditions being specially favorable for mutual understanding. § 111. Conditions are different in the larger social world, and love in the more intensive sense is a problem rather than a fact. § 112. Yet civilization stands for a relatively high degree both of sympathy and united interest, due, however,



to the enlargement, through scientific study, of the possibilities both of nature and of the social order, — through which alone conflicting interests can be brought to a real unity. § 113. This scientific organization of society is justice, or love become real through technical adjustment. § 114. The second aspect of the contrast is estheticism *versus* intellectualism, the latter representing the practical and the utilitarian. § 115. Beauty differs from utility in representing a finer and more comprehensive realization of more personal ends. § 116. Esthetic appreciation is finer and more concrete than scientific knowledge, but relatively opaque as regards meaning; science is clearer and more systematic but more abstract. § 117. The superiorities of esthetic appreciation are enlisted to show that love is superior to justice. § 118. As art is irrelevant to logic, so is love to justice. § 119. But illogical art and illogical love are equally false, even from an esthetic standpoint. Either beauty or love grasped only in esthetic appreciation is only partially realized; as conscious beings our ideal is a fully self-conscious realization of the values of life. § 120. Not, therefore, abstract calculation in place of feeling, but an ideal combining immediate realization in feeling with transparent clearness of idea, which, in last analysis, is the ideal of science and art alike. § 121. And also the meaning of the Greek conception of justice. § 122. Justice aims, then, at a perfect harmony and perfect individual freedom, which, in the end, is the only real meaning of love.

IV Self-Sacrifice and Merit 221

§ 123. Granting even that justice is beautiful, still is it moral? Can merit be won except through self-sacrifice? § 124. The question presupposes, not a strictly moral, but a romantic ideal. § 125. And merit is won, not by sacrifice, but by consideration, — inclusion of your fellow in your plans; such consideration deserves a return of consideration without reference to cost. § 126. And in last analysis merit is won by any determination to consider ends beyond the present; even prudential calculation is so far virtuous, however narrowly selfish. § 127. The claim that merit involves sacrifice regards thinking as an expenditure of energy; but the energy expended upon a given object, hence the sacrifice involved in a given service, is smaller in proportion as it is a thinking expenditure. § 128. Nor would virtue be lacking in a finally perfect social state, provided it were self-conscious state.



LECTURE IV

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

I The Theory of Natural Rights 231

§ 129. The older theory of natural rights assumed that men were created free and society was the result of a contract. § 130. This theory being disproved, the later theory holds that the individual is the product of society and his rights are conferred by the state. § 131. But the term "product" applies only to mechanical bodies; the conscious individual is an original force. § 132. He has therefore a natural right to realize his ends; not a right by inheritance, or from society, but because he is a conscious agent and knows what he is doing. All rights and values are for consciousness and created by consciousness, and all consciousness is individual. § 133. Since consciousness is a matter of degree, the individual right is a matter of degree. § 134. And the rights of intelligent (*i.e.*, conscious) beings cannot so far conflict; the social relation both confirms the individual right and creates a mutual obligation. § 135. Yet an individual right is not a question of social service; an intelligent activity is necessarily socially serviceable, but the obligation rests upon the others to help themselves. § 136. The assertion of a right rests upon the same ground as the assertion of a fact; not upon social approval, but upon inner consistency. § 137. The right of a pupil to the service of a teacher depends upon the exercise of responsible intelligence on the part of himself; by which, in realizing the teacher's right, he creates an obligation. § 138. Similar relations exist between capital and labor and between the men of wealth and the general public; the public has no special rights because it is public. § 139. For the same reason there is no special "right of private enterprise" as against state-enterprise; it is a question of the location of the intelligence. § 140. Natural rights have suffered from being confused with the rights of corporations; but the corporation is indeed the creation of the state and, as at present constituted, has no natural rights. § 141. In what sense is the doctrine one of "natural" rights? In the sense that the right is determined, not by the state, but by the intelligence of the individual, and that the nature of the individual is expressed, not in original instinct, but in instinct become self-conscious and intelligent. § 142. Similarly, a "social contract" is involved in the very idea of the social relations of conscious beings.

II The Conception of Intelligence 260

§ 143. What reality belongs to a right not yet recognized? The reality of any true idea; that of a rational claim addressed to



rational beings. § 144. As such it will compel recognition or, if not recognized, enforce itself. § 145. Does this justify the right of the monopolist or the corrupt politician to what he gets? Yes, as against the less intelligent, but not as against the more intelligent; but the superior intelligence must prove itself by ability to meet present methods upon their own grounds. § 146. But what is intelligence, and how distinguished from mere cleverness? By breadth of vision (in a coherent view) and keenness of insight; on this basis constructive thought stands for a higher degree of intelligence. § 147. And even a meanly self-seeking cleverness, become constructive, has become socially serviceable. § 148. This academic conception of intelligence is also at bottom the popular conception, in which, again, in last analysis, intelligence is identified with virtue. § 149. It is the conception implied in the demand for fair competition. § 150. And in personal relations the rights of the intelligent are instinctively appreciated.

III Individualism and Socialism 274

§ 151. Older individualism was dominated by the idea of *laissez faire:* hence the antithesis of individualism and socialism. § 152. In our own view there is no antithesis, so far as "socialism" stands simply for a comprehensive organization of society. § 153. For the conscious agent freedom is freedom of choice, and this is a question, not of absence of impediment, but of presence of variety of opportunity; which is secured only through social organization. § 154. But organization for freedom must be distinguished from enforcement of the common good, which is at variance both with the idea of social organization and with the direction of its historical development. § 155. The idea of organization for freedom is typified in the pure-food laws, and would be further realized in the standardization of all merchandise. § 156. In the matter of railway freight-rates it calls for apportionment of rate to service rather than equalization of burdens, for justice rather than brotherly love; "what the traffic will bear" is not an intelligent principle. § 157. And in general an individualistic organization of society calls for a careful analysis of accounts, as well as a careful distinction of the several state-functions, as the indispensable condition of intelligent self-government.

IV The Logic of the Social Problem 292

§ 158. In the theory of the lectures the perfect harmony of interests is reserved for the perfectly conscious; what relevance has this for us, who, incapable of becoming perfectly conscious, must compromise? It furnishes the chiefly important point in the compromise, namely, the idea to be realized; upon the clearness of



which will depend the significance of the compromise. § 159. The idea is: first, that the social good is not a common good, but a mutual and distributive good; the logic of the common good is the logic of ignorance, or the logic of chance. § 160. Secondly, that the social problem is a technological problem, calling, not for a change of heart, but for a change of conditions. § 161. Thirdly, that individual duty is a matter of enlightened self-interest and practical wisdom. § 162. This is not to exalt narrowness of aim, but simply to repeat that, only as adjustment is a fact, has either freedom or unity a real meaning.

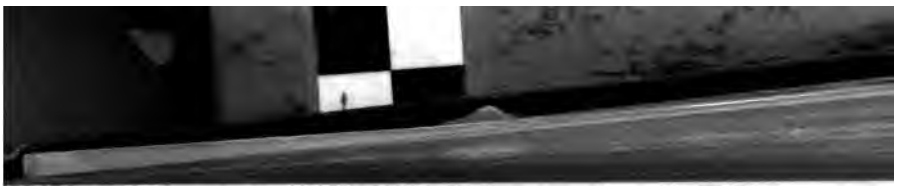




LECTURE I

THE CONCEPTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL





INDIVIDUALISM

LECTURE I

THE CONCEPTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL

I Introduction

§ 1. The purpose of these lectures is to develop the conception of the individual and to make clear the significance and importance of the individual in the world. The reasons which lead me to select this as a timely and important topic are to be found in the present dominant view of nature and of man which Tennyson has summarized in the lines:

> "So careful of the type she seems,
> So careless of the single life."

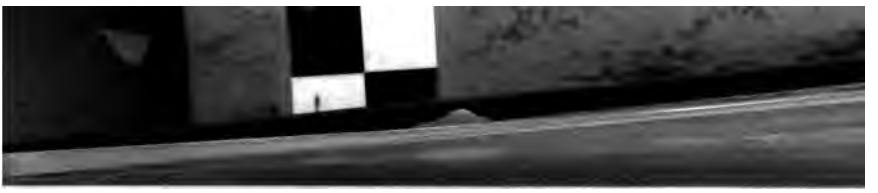
Not only is "Nature" (of the biological theory of evolution) so careful of the type as to be careless of the single life. The idea is characteristic of all of our later nineteenth-century thought, including those departments of thought which deal with the various aspects of human life. These, known formerly as the moral sciences, are now the "social" sciences. And the purpose of the change of term is not merely to note that the life of thinking beings is one of communication and mutual interest; it is rather to substitute for all mutual and individual interests a so-called common interest. Humanity is now "society," — that and nothing more;



and society is an organism, of which the life of the individual is a temporary function. Society, in other words, is the concrete reality, of which the individual is a mere abstraction.

We are therefore prepared to hear from contemporary ethics that "all morality is social"; that goodness is synonymous with altruism; and that reason and duty can now dictate nothing but self-sacrifice for the good of society and of the race. And logic tells the same story. For truth is also social; it turns out now to be nothing but the opinion of the race as against that of the individual. Along the same line history, economics, and sociology treat the individual as an episode in a social and economic movement, a merely passing detail of an essentially social process. Likewise for psychology mental development is social. The individual is the product of society. Through heredity society provides him with a set of "social" instincts to begin with, and then carefully guides the development of these instincts into a "socially-formed" personal character. Child-psychology, so-called, fairly wallows in the social, and condemns the poor child to an exclusively social life. I have somewhere seen a pedagogical treatise in which the child rose in the morning, donned his social vestments, ate a social breakfast, and went about his social occupations, indulging later in the day in some social recreation and some further social refection, — after which, I should say, it remained only to put on his social night-gown and tuck him into his social bed.

The term "social" has thus become only a piece of academic slang. Yet beneath this indiscriminateness of usage there is implied still an antithesis and contradiction between the social and the individual, to the disadvantage of the individual. As the social has come



to stand for positive values the individual has been relegated to the negative. In logic the individual opinion has become the typical representative of error and illusion. In history, and in sociology and economics, the individual is no longer an original and real factor but, as noted before, a function of an organism; or a mere phenomenon, *i.e.*, an illusorily personal appearance of really impersonal "social forces"; or perhaps not even that, but rather, in the evolution of the social organism, the destructive force opposed to the social as constructive. And thus it has come about that in ethics "individualism" is, with "egoism," a popular synonym for selfish meanness, — in fact a generic term for moral evil. "Individualism" is the term used to describe the tendencies of the trusts, the stock-jobbers and the corrupt politicians, while the honest citizen, and particularly the unfortunate citizen, is supposed to be "performing a social function."

§ 2. In opposition to all this I shall undertake in these lectures to defend the cause of the individual. And I may therefore conveniently begin by announcing my thesis, under the following three heads:

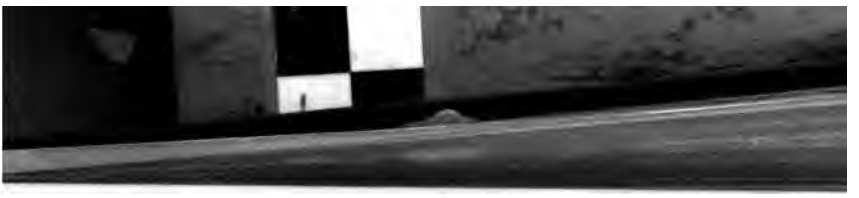
First, I wish to show that the individual is the original source and constituent of all value; and therefore that there can be no higher standard of obligation for you or for me than that set by our personal ends and ideals. In other words, I shall preach the now repudiated doctrines of rational egoism, in the Third Lecture, and of natural rights, in the Fourth.

But secondly, I shall endeavor to show that in a community of conscious beings the personal interests of the several individuals are, so far, strictly coordinate; so that each is necessarily committed to a consideration of the ends of each of the others. And therefore I may



disclaim in advance any suggestions of anarchy, either moral or political.

Thirdly, however, — you will note that I do not assert this relation of any individual in any society, but only of the several individuals *so far* as they are conscious. Their coordinateness of interest will be shown to be a function, in the mathematical sense, of their self-consciousness. And this I shall assert on the ground of a theory of the meaning and operations of consciousness, the development of which will be nearly as important for the purpose of these lectures as the analysis of individualism itself. Hence, the two main topics are: the significance of the individual and the significance of consciousness.



II Two Conceptions of the Individual

§ 3. And so I shall begin by asking you to follow me, in this First Lecture, through the analysis, first of two more or less abstract conceptions of the human individual, and then of the correlative conceptions of society and of nature. The concrete significance of this analysis may not be clearly evident before the Second Lecture. But in the meantime if any one should object to beginning with abstractions I may defend myself by pointing out that abstraction is involved in the merest description. Is the color of the lake today green or blue? You can never say exactly until you have made a more or less abstract definition of green and blue, perhaps not until you have arbitrarily located them at certain points on the solar spectrum. Or, again, what is the size of a given farm? or its shape? Here you require a distinction of length and breadth which, I need not say, are at once the most abstract and the most necessary of all abstractions. Now it would be too simple to say that the abstract conceptions of the individual that I am about to present are related to each other as length and breadth, or as two points on the spectrum. Yet they will serve a similar purpose, — that, namely, of enabling us to say wherein consists the individuality of any concrete individual.

The human individual has two radically contrasted aspects; the external aspect, as he appears to others, the internal aspect, as he is for himself. You will appreciate the force of this contrast if I remind you that inorganic bodies have, at least as conceived in our common sense, but one aspect and that the external. To any human being you may put the question, How does



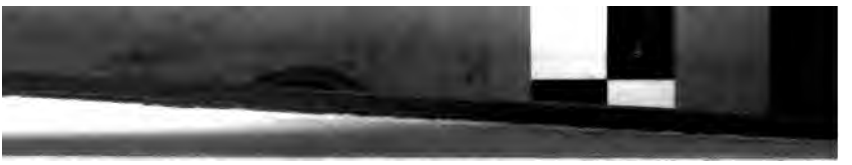
it seem to be a man and to perform the acts of a man? Or, how does it seem to be president, or professor, or what not? Or, again, you may turn to his neighbor and ask how it looks to be a man: what is the human individual to the external observer? But in the case of inorganic bodies, the billiard-ball, for instance, you will ask only how the object appears to the observer. You may indeed formulate the question, How would it seem to be a billiard-ball and to collide with other billiard-balls? And I should hold that the question is not irrelevant. But obviously you will receive no satisfactory answer. The internal aspect is one which, for our common sense, belongs chiefly and almost exclusively to human beings.

§ 4. Our first conception, however, is of the individual in his external aspect. I shall call him the mechanical individual. He is the individual as he appears in the cold light of scientific observation, wholly divested of any qualities which might be attributed to him by sympathetic interpretation. He is, in other words, the individual viewed by us as a pure object, as something over against and before us, something finally disentangled from our own point of view, set up, if you like, against the opposite wall, and become quite independent of any feelings he may arouse in us as subjects. So considered, the individual is a mechanical fact, — a mechanical object; and he differs in no essential particular from other mechanical objects. We may not pause here to consider in detail the meaning of "mechanical." It will be sufficient if we say that our mechanical individual is the human individual viewed as a material object in space and time, whose movements are determined by the operation of force. Viewed as such he is concerned only (so far as he can be "concerned") with



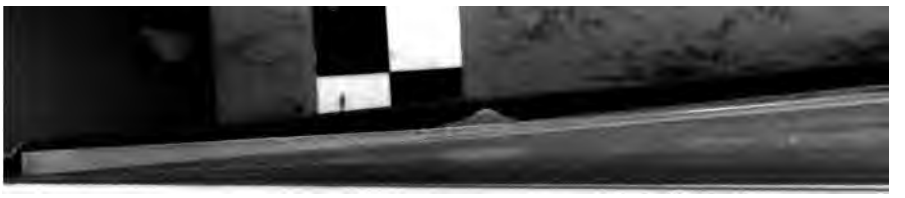
material goods; and his relations to nature and to other human individuals are in last analysis those only of space, time and force. In a word, then, the mechanical individual is the human individual conceived as a unit of the same kind as one of the billiard-balls on the table.

Now it may be that in this description you are unable to recognize the view that you have of any of your neighbors. You may claim, perhaps, that, even for the external view, there is all the difference in the world between your human neighbor and a billiard-ball. And truly there is; a difference in size, weight, configuration, etc., *i.e.*, a mechanical difference; but no difference in principle. If you should find any other difference, then I should say that you have not yet arrived at the standpoint of the pure observer. You are viewing your fellow-man, not in the cold light of scientific observation, but in the warmer light of sympathetic interpretation from personal experience. And you will be convinced of this if you reflect that not all human actions have for you the same degree of significance. Those of your intimate friend are alive with personal meaning. But what of your more distant neighbor? What, for example, of the man whom you know chiefly as a unit in a table of statistics? He is *par excellence* the human individual viewed as an object of scientific observation. For you he is as impersonal a fact as the billiard-ball itself. From Hobbes to Spencer, all those who have endeavored to take a strictly observational view of human life have reached essentially this conception of the individual. Even the form of the illustration is not accidental. The billiard-ball has played a conspicuous part in philosophical and scientific theory. It is without doubt the guiding image for the conception of the physical atom; and the physical atom



and the billiard-ball together are responsible for much of our social philosophy, of that portion of it at least which antedates the appearance of the "social organism." Nay, you may even find conceptions of social relations which are perfectly true of billiard-balls but not at all true of men. But in any case you will easily see why the figure should be chosen for the expression of the mechanical principle; for outside of the physical laboratory, nowhere in the world is the mechanical principle made sensuously self-evident with such beauty and precision as on the billiard-table.

§ 5. Our second conception of the individual is not so readily formulated. He is of course the individual in his internal aspect, — the individual as he seems, or feels, to himself, and not as he looks, to others. But what this all means can best be seen by contrast. When a billiard-ball moves from its place we attribute its motion invariably to some external *cause*, to the impact of the cue or of another ball. And in varying degree, as just noted, we apply this interpretation to the acts of our fellow-men, more especially as they are in a social sense remote from ourselves. The actions of a unit of a statistical table, though a human unit, are for us distinctly a matter of cause. But we never consciously, certainly not willingly, adopt the causal explanation for our own actions, — least of all at the moment when we are acting, and when as agent and originator of the act we are in the heart and center of the action itself. We may have some doubt about our past acts, because, from our present point of view, they, like the acts of our fellows, are viewed as relatively external facts. But this present conscious act — this thing which I now deliberately choose to do — is never the *effect* of a *cause*, but the *expression* of a *reason*.

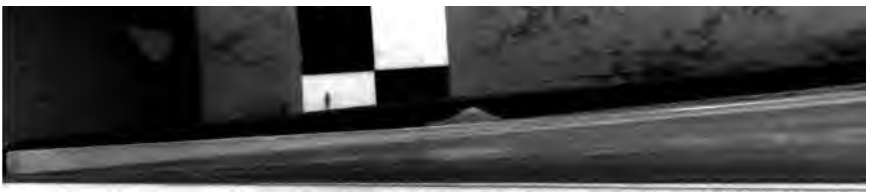


§ 6. In this contrast we see the individual in his internal aspect. As our mechanical individual was defined and distinguished by his spatial dimensions, so, now, our conscious or spiritual individual is to be defined by his meaning or purpose. For me as a present conscious agent, not merely acting but acting knowingly, it is inconceivable that what I deliberately choose to do should be the blind outcome of mechanical forces. I may accept the fact that I am a physical being, and that I have a brain and nervous system, which cannot be conceived to act except from mechanical causes. I may even see that the external stimuli are such as fully to account for the act which I now choose to perform. But all this is irrelevant to the point of view which I occupy as a present conscious agent. Other men may be caused to act, if you please; and I am willing that you should explain their action as the product of the stimulus which is stronger. But I, knowing what I am about to do, cannot conceive myself to do otherwise than choose that object which I see to be *better*. For me as a conscious agent the only conceivable ground of action, the only conceivably efficient motive, is an idea, — that is to say, a reason, a purpose, an end, a meaning, a judgment of value. And of value, in last analysis, to myself; for, as we shall have reason to emphasize later, it is not any other man's meaning that can furnish a conceivable motive for me, nor yet any abstractly "social" meaning, but only that which I can conceive to have a meaning for myself. And so, from the internal standpoint, I, the conscious individual, am expressed in that meaning which the world has for me, and in that purpose which I seek to accomplish there.

Now it is possible that this conception of the individual, like the first conception, may appear to have been



drawn too finely. Just as there I may seem to have exaggerated your attitude of observing your fellow-men, so now I may seem to exaggerate your confidence in yourself. For myself, you may urge, I have no certain assurance that, as a self-conscious being, I am bound to choose that which I judge the better and the more reasonable. I find myself constantly choosing, quite self-consciously, it would seem, that which I know to be worse, and at the same time assenting to that which I know to be absurd; and though to some degree my ideas and motives are ordered rationally, yet for a large part they are also at the mercy of accident and chance-association. But — my reply would be — the question just now before us is not whether, ***in a moment when*** you are conscious, you ***do in fact*** perform an irrational act rather than its rational alternative, but whether, from the point of view of the conscious agent — that agent at that moment — you can conceive this to be possible. That self-conscious irrationality is possible you may indeed assert. I shall leave this to be answered by the argument of the lectures as a whole. What I now claim is that the assertion is impossible from the standpoint of the conscious agent himself. And therefore I should say that you are not conceiving your action from the heart of the action itself. You are viewing it perhaps as it appears after the fact when the numerous subtle and remote considerations which gave the action its warmth, and at the same time its meaning, are now lost to sight. If you could get back into the point of view of the action itself (*e.g.*, the point of view of this letter of yours written twenty years ago) you would find that you were not so great a fool as you are now disposed to think. Or perhaps you are viewing it as you think it ought to be viewed, — from the scientific standpoint



of cold-blooded observation. Or you may be selecting as typical some action which was really not seriously considered. In any case your assertion means to me that you are not speaking of *your* action, from the standpoint in which it was immediately and certainly yours, but of self-conscious action considered as a general and abstract fact. From a general and undefined standpoint it does indeed seem that —

> "Video meliora proboque,
> Deteriora sequor."

Yet the stronger the seeming the more mysterious and inexplicable. How *can* I choose the worse while in view of the better? Only if the act is determined by some external force. Never if it be truly mine. For in last analysis no act can be truly mine whose meaning I do not comprehend and in comprehending approve and accept as my own.

§ 7. When we compare the individuals of our two conceptions it is evident that, superficially at least, they are by no means coincident. The mechanical individual, like every mechanical object, is, or is supposed to be,[1] a perfectly determinate quantity, a thing of definite dimensions. As a spatial fact he is limited by the surface of his body and is at the same time coextensive with his body as a whole. As a dynamic fact he represents a given quantity of potential energy disposed in a given way. And for a physicist and anatomist of superhuman clearness of vision it should conceivably be pos-

[1] In all this it should be remembered that the mechanical conception is by no means a finality, never less so than today. For our purposes it is unnecessary to carry the definition to the bitter end — there may be no end — but only far enough to bring out the meaning of the contrast of mechanical and conscious for our thought of today.



sible to state with mathematical precision the manner and extent of the influence which our individual may bring to bear upon his physical environment and upon his fellow-men. But with the spiritual individual it is quite otherwise. Even for our empirical psychology it seems that our bodies are not coextensive with ourselves. Any tool or instrument that we are able to control becomes so far a part of ourselves. The blind man comes into contact with the world, not where his hand grasps his stick, but where the stick touches the ground. On the other hand, any part of my body which is beyond my control becomes so far external and perhaps hostile to myself. And therefore, although for me, even as a spiritual individual, the body furnishes the center from which, and the instrument through which, I undertake to realize my ends in the world, yet *I*, the individual, am not coextensive with the mass of my body nor are all the bodily actions my actions. As a spiritual individual I am found in every action that expresses my meaning, whether it be that of my hand, my type-writer, my servant, or my political party; and any object that refuses to express my meaning, though it be a member of my own body, is so far not truly myself. Accordingly, where the mechanical individual is a thing of definite and limited extent, the spiritual individual is, in the mechanical sense, wholly indeterminate. Fully self-conscious, he will be as broad as the universe itself. For there is no fact in heaven or earth which, in last analysis, is irrelevant to his purposes. And yet, in his own spiritual sense, in the degree to which he is self-conscious, he is also perfectly determinate. For in the end his interest in the world about him is not an abstract world-interest but a concrete, individual interest peculiar to himself.



And as we shall now see, this contrast in the mode of distinguishing the human individual is a matter of far-reaching significance. For the story of the individual is only begun with the individual himself. The nature of the individual must be correlative to that of the world in which he lives. Our two abstract conceptions represent the conceptions of the individual presupposed, respectively, in the idealistic and materialistic theories of social relations; and these at their extreme may be conceived as the opposite poles of social philosophy, between which lie every concrete conception of the individual and the social order. But, as noted before, it is by analysis of the abstract that we are enabled to estimate the concrete. From the abstract conceptions of the individual we turn, then, to the corresponding conceptions of the social order.



III The Mechanical Social Order

Our problem is: given a group of individuals of a given kind, what relations will they bear to each other, and what will be the possibilities of social order?

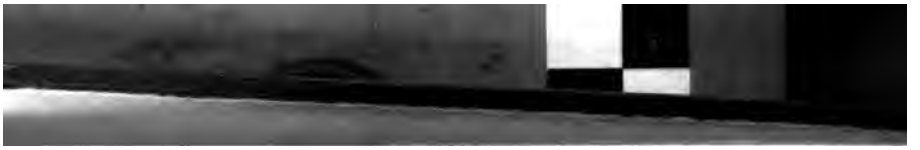
§ 8. We begin with the mechanical group. Here we are guided by the consideration that for the mechanical view the individual is a perfectly definite quantity. As such he is an object of definite dimensions and, in last analysis, of spatial dimensions. Now the characteristic peculiarity of the spatial individual is that he is, so to speak, contained wholly within his own skin. His being cannot overlap or interpenetrate that of any other. Two such individuals are therefore in an absolute sense mutually exclusive, and if it were otherwise they would no longer be individuals. For the very principle of individuation which defines each as himself demands that each shall be wholly within himself and outside of the other. Human individuals, like individual billiard-balls, are two if they occupy different portions of space; as contained within the same space they are only one.

§ 9. But the significance for human life of this abstract principle of individuation lies in the consideration that the human individual, regarded as a spatial and mechanical fact, is a consumer of material goods. He also lives in a world where the sum of goods, like the extension of his own being, is a definitely fixed quantity; of this I shall speak later. Hence, the general fact with regard to such consumption is this: the more for you, the less for me. Just as your occupation of a given portion of space prevents me from occupying the same space (at the same time), so does your consumption of goods diminish the quantity that may be consumed by me.



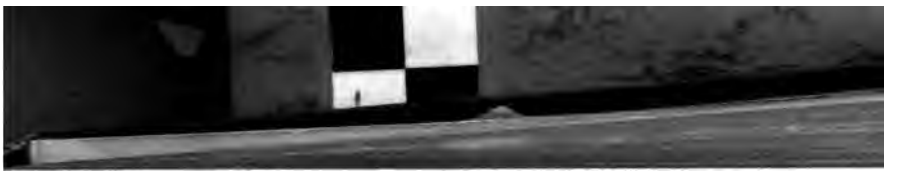
Nor does this apply only to goods in the rawest material sense. It holds true in some sense for every form of material property whether it be a coat, a house, a horse, or a seat at the opera, — for everything, that is to say, that can be put on the market and sold, and for many things that are not bought and sold. In all matters relating to the enjoyment of material goods your use and possession is in some way an interference with mine. From two persons in the same bed to two persons on the same planet, each, regarded as a purely mechanical fact, is a possible source of limitation for the other.

§ 10. Accordingly, in a formulation of social relations from a mechanical standpoint, we reach the result that the several individuals are mutually exclusive and their interests necessarily conflicting. And in this standpoint, as we may now see, lies the origin and source of that familiar assumption to the effect that the interests of men are naturally at variance; and therefore that competition (conceived here as essentially destructive) is the soul of life. This assumption was long ago expressed by Hobbes in the statement that the natural state of man is a state of warfare, and more recently by Herbert Spencer in his application to social relations of the principle of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, and also in his earlier conception of society as an aggregate of atoms and atomic forces. In our thought of today the assumption is applied more particularly to economic and commercial relations, — where, indeed, it is to a certain extent clearly justified. If you take that most purely commercial of commercial situations, namely, the stock-market, it is evident that, there at least, every fluctuation of price which brings gain to one brings a corresponding loss to another. The assump-



tion of a fundamental conflict of individual interests presupposes, then, a mechanical view of the individual and of his social relations. You may ask, indeed, how a purely mechanical individual could be assumed to have any "interests" whatever, and your question would be relevant as touching the ultimate consistency and justification of the mechanical view. But just at present our purpose is to note that, if we endow our individuals with interests, while treating them otherwise as purely mechanical facts — which is a very popular custom in social philosophy — we must, with all materialistic views of social relations, regard these interests as necessarily conflicting. From this point of view each human individual, like each billiard-ball, is a source of restriction for each other.

§ 11. You may claim, however, that I have failed once more to take account of the actual mechanical differences between men and billiard-balls. The billiard-ball, you may say, is a relatively simple mass which is capable only of going where it is sent, while the man, regarded even as a mechanism, is a highly complex organization which is capable of adjusting its actions to those of others; for him, therefore, a collision of interests is more or less avoidable. Here, however, my reply would be, you have assumed, in your human mechanism, a guiding intelligence and purpose. If you apply the same intelligence to the billiard-balls you may secure a similar result. For I suppose that a skilled mathematician could readily devise a system of paths whereby three, or perhaps a score of billiard-balls could roll forever over the same table without coming into collision. But apart from the guiding intelligence, your human mechanisms are as little capable of adjustment as your billiard-balls. It is true that some mechanisms



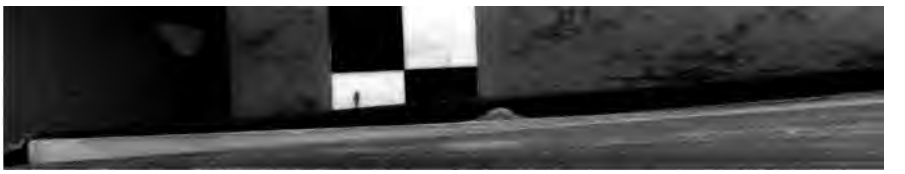
are more *adjustable* than others, — at the hands of an intelligent director. Left to themselves, however, two automobiles are as little likely to avoid collision as two billiard-balls. Assuming a level road, all depends upon the initial direction. And therein lies the gist of the whole matter. When you assert that the human individual, regarded as a complex mechanism, is capable of self-adjustment, you overlook the consideration that as a mechanical fact he is a fatally determined quantity. As a dynamic fact — as a set of potential energies — he is in position, no doubt, to be turned in any one of many directions, *if there be an intelligent purpose to choose the direction he is to take.* Apart from this purpose he *is*, like the automobile at any point in its career, headed in just one direction. And this initial direction, together with the mechanical conditions of the path which it marks, determines unequivocally, for him as for the billiard-ball, the course he is to take.

§ 12. Here it is worth noting that this conception of the individual, as a definitely fixed fact whose actions are mechanically determined, is just the conception presupposed in all the so-called "laws" of human behavior, — that is to say, in all attempts to formulate human relations from the cold-blooded, scientific point of view. Such attempts have characterized more particularly the science of economics, quite appropriately, no doubt, though Carlyle, from his own hot-blooded point of view, was equally appropriate in calling it the "dismal science." The classical economics was a compendium of such impersonal "laws," which were assumed to govern economic relations in the same absolute fashion as the laws of physics and chemistry govern the distribution of matter. In economics or in physics, however, the presupposition of law is a perfectly determinate individ-



ual. For example, the law of supply and demand: if the individual could do anything he pleased with anything that were offered him the demand would cease to be a determinant of price. Again, the law of diminishing returns presupposes a fixed maximum capacity of human intelligence and skill. Aside from this it could never be predicted whether returns would diminish or increase. The very conception of law as universal and invariable excludes the possibility of any readjustment of behavior, except as such readjustment is already specifically provided for in the original constitution of the individual. Hence the popular conception — absurd but logically correct — that the "economic laws" would continue to direct our action in the face of a unanimous decision to act contrariwise.

§ 13. It may seem, then, that we have closed the path to our next question. For what we have now to ask is, What sort of social order is possible for these mutually exclusive and hostile individuals? But if the individuals are inadjustable it would seem that no order is possible but that which is already determined. Nevertheless you may have remarked that those who hold that individual interests are necessarily in conflict, and that social relations are strictly determined, are apt to be none the less interested in social reform. And, as noted before, our present purpose is less to study the pure logic of the mechanical view than to see how this logic operates, in a manner not strictly logical, to shape our actual human thought. Now if you will study the attitude in which social questions are very commonly approached you will find the student of society regarding his fellow-men as a group of objects external to himself which are governed by laws that he could not conceive himself to obey. He views them as we view the



billiard-balls on the table or the chessman on the board, as so many determinate objects, having strictly limited possibilities of order and arrangement, within which their relations may be guided and controlled, not perhaps from within but certainly from without. For them, indeed, no social order may be possible but that which is already determined. But for him, the student of society and its would-be reformer, the problem of the best possible arrangement is practical and significant. And so, taking some such attitude as this, we may ask what kind of social order can be constructed of individuals whose interests are essentially hostile.

§ 14. In general terms the answer is very simple. It is evident, to begin with, that no arrangement is possible by which all interests can be completely satisfied. Nor, indeed, if we keep the terms of our problem strictly in mind, can we conceive the satisfaction of any one to be increased by the presence of others in his world. For if the social units are non-interpenetrable, like the physical atoms, it follows that each by his mere presence in the world reduces the possibilities of satisfaction of each other. Or, again, if each is a consumer of material goods, of which there is but a limited supply, and if the goods consumed by one cannot also be consumed by another, it follows that each by his presence in the world reduces for every other the source of supply. Accordingly, by the terms of our problem, there can be no complete or real harmony of individual interests, no social unity resting upon universally complete individual satisfaction, but at best only a compromise of claims based upon mutual sacrifice.

If, now, we investigate the terms of the compromise, we find our answer once more in the logic of the mechanical view. According to this view the social order is at



any moment a composition of forces, in which the distribution of goods, of power and of influence is being determined according to the relative initial energy of the individual components. Like the several balls on the billiard-table or the several pieces on the chessboard, the individuals in human society enter the contest each with a specific initial energy and a specific advantage or disadvantage of position and constitution. These initial differences constitute for the social reformer the unalterable terms of his problem. Ultimately, indeed, they must, even if left to themselves, reach a position of final equilibrium. In the meantime, however, it appears possible, through a careful study of the conditions, to accelerate the process and to diminish the waste and the struggle by which, to some degree, the crude mechanical adjustment is inevitably attended. That is to say, it appears possible for him, the social reformer. What he seeks, then, is a basis of permanent equilibrium, — such an ordering of individuals and such a distribution of goods that each may have, by no means all that he demands, but all that, in view of the presence of other individuals in his world, he can possibly expect to hold.

§ 15. The mechanical society is thus an equilibrium of forces. It represents a situation in which each individual holds the place that properly belongs to him by virtue of his individual power; and by the terms of the mechanical view this is the only situation in which we may expect to find a stable organization of society. Even so, however, it may appear possible to determine the exact nature of this equilibrium by various combinations of the component forces. And at any rate, among the social reformers who adopt an essentially mechanical point of view we find advocates both of individual-



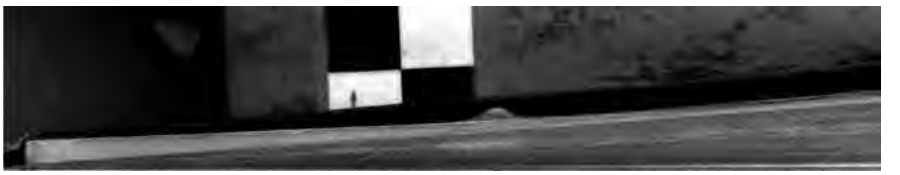
ism and of socialism. Individualism will then be the doctrine that the individual members of society should be left free to exercise their powers of acquisition without interference from organized combinations. Socialism, on the other hand, advocates the control of the (presumably) stronger members by combinations of the weaker. It is a question, indeed, whether, in view of the natural gravitation of the stronger members of the weaker party toward the party of the stronger, the final situation would not, if conceived on a strictly mechanical basis, be the same for both cases. But this need not concern us here.[2]

For our present purpose is to see how the mechanical conception of the individual is responsible, in one quarter, for the assumption that society is necessarily a struggle of hostile forces, and in another quarter for that interpretation of individualism which makes the term synonymous with a mean and narrow selfishness. Defining the individual from the mechanical standpoint you will say that the typical expressions of his individuality are his occupation of space and his consumption which is also destruction, of material goods, — in both of which characteristics he is exclusive and unsocial. And when you have set up these characteristics as typical you will have no difficulty in discovering that every assertion of individuality involves an invidious distinction. For in some sense every social relation involves a certain mechanical exclusion, and every sort of individual property, from the coat on your back to your right to a personal opinion, involves some exclusive control of conditions, which may be conceived to limit the opportunities of your neighbor. Keeping these

[2] A further elaboration of the mechanical social order will be found in Chapter V of my *Introductory Study of Ethics* (N. Y., 1903).



mechanical conditions in mind, and forgetting the possibilities of adjustment, one may readily reach the conclusion that liberty for you necessarily imposes a certain restraint upon me; that distinction for you involves me in a corresponding obscurity; or for that matter that any respect for your tastes or opinions must demand a qualified assertion of my own. In a word, every expansion of your personality will be conceived to involve a contraction of my own; so that in all the relations of life the individual interest is hostile to the common good, and the common good can be purchased only by individual sacrifice.



IV The Idealistic Social Order

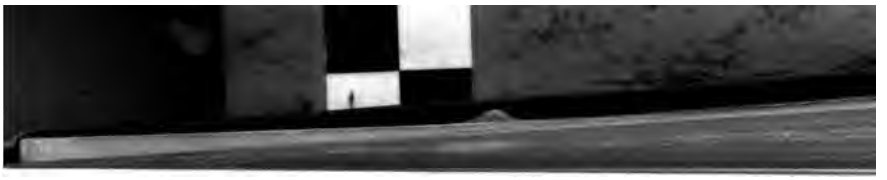
So much for the materialistic conception of social relations. We have considered the relations of mechanical individuals taken as a group. Turning now to the opposite, or idealistic theory, we must note that a society of conscious individuals cannot appropriately be regarded as a mere group. But for the present we may conveniently treat them as such, and our question will therefore be: what kind of relations are set up when conscious individuals are conceived to come together?

§ 16. Now, just as all materialistic theories of social relations have affirmed, or tended to affirm, that the nature of men is such that individual interests are essentially hostile, so have idealistic theories taught that the interests of individuals are essentially and by nature harmonious. The text for all theories of this kind is the familiar statement of Aristotle that "man is by nature a political animal." That is to say, his structure, physical and mental, is such that his good is to be found only in harmonious relations with his fellow-men. Modern sociologists of the idealistic type base the need of such a harmony, somewhat more opaquely, upon a "consciousness of kind"; or, borrowing the language of biological evolution, they declare that the individual is by nature a "function" of the "social organism." Not merely is he fitted for social relations; he is really only a fragment — a passing molecular detail — of a larger organic body, of which he is at the same time the hereditary product. As such he enters the world with instincts formed already in accordance with social needs, and his good can therefore consist only in the performance of his "social function."



All this is very well. But to denominate society as an organism and the individual as a political and social animal is by no means to make it clear how and why the interests of individuals are essentially harmonious. And it seems to me that the emphasis placed at present upon the essential unity of society is apt to leave one with the impression that the harmony of individual interests is somehow miraculously preestablished. For example, Professor Dewey goes so far as to argue that unless the individual has an instinctive and inherent (*i.e.*, hereditary) interest in the well-being of others, he never can be brought to make it an object of genuine consideration, and any coordination of interests will then be forever "artificial" and ineffective. Yet, assuming the hereditary basis, assuming that the individual is the hereditary product of society (which, of course, I decline to assume [3]), it by no means follows that his needs and his instincts are in harmony with those of his fellows. Is it not, indeed, a common complaint of parents that their children prefer to have their own way? And in our human family as a whole shall we not say that strife and discord are at least as conspicuous as harmony and cooperation? If we are to show that, in spite of all this, the interests of individuals are still "essentially" in harmony, then it is for us to point out that "essential" attribute of the individual — and of the individual himself — from which this harmony may be derived and to justify the derivation. To define this attribute, and to make the derivation clear, is one of the main objects of these lectures. In this First Lecture, however, I shall offer only a general and preliminary analysis, less in the interest of concrete fact than of the logic of the idealistic theory. My point will be, then, that just as a conflict

[3] See §§ 90, 131.



of interests results from investing the individual with the mechanical attribute, so must a harmony of interests follow from the assumption that the individual is a conscious agent.

§ 17. First, however, to remove any confusion regarding the purpose of our argument, let me remind you once more that the meaning which defines our conscious individual, must be in last analysis his own meaning and no one's else. If this point be obscured the whole object of the argument is lost. The conscious individual is one who knows what he is doing. For one who acts knowingly the only conceivable motive to action is a reason, a purpose, a conception of value. But, just on this account, no motive is conceivable save that which in last analysis offers a value for himself. The ends of others may be represented, indeed, in his own and logically implied therein; for conscious beings, as we shall see, this must necessarily be true; but only as thus represented can they be ends for him. No individual can, therefore, with a clear consciousness of what he is choosing, consent to be eternally damned, — either for the glory of God, as the older gospel put it, or for the glory of society, as it stands in the gospel of today. If the glory of God is not also my glory and the salvation of society is not also my salvation, then God and society are necessarily strangers to me, and their good can be for me neither a moral obligation nor a psychologically conceivable motive.

But now, with this in mind, we are to see that the interests of different conscious individuals, just because they are conscious, are essentially in harmony. To begin with a negative and rather abstract consideration, it is clear that in the attribute of consciousness itself there are no necessary implications of conflict. It is



otherwise with the mechanical attribute. Two mechanical individuals cannot occupy the same space, nor consume, nor, in the mechanical sense, even possess, the same goods; assuming a scarcity of goods, conflict necessarily follows. But two conscious facts — two ideas, if you please — are not in the spatial sense two. Distinct they must certainly be. But their distinctness is not a matter of mutual isolation; but rather a matter of mutual inclusion and comparison. For the world of ideas, as we shall see, individuality of meaning requires that each shall know the other, and at the same time know the other as distinct from itself. But since this distinction involves no spatial exclusiveness there are no necessary conditions of conflict; for conflict, interference, mutual repression, — these will be found, when the grounds are made clear and the issue is brought to a point, to refer always to the exclusive possession of a given object in space, or the occupation of a given portion of space, — in the same place at the same time.

If these considerations seem too abstract, let us take a concrete case. Take the love of two parents for their child. You have probably known cases where even parental affection was a narrowly selfish affair. I pass by for the present the consideration that such affection is mostly of the character of a blind animal impulse, that it has little of the character of an intelligent meaning. What interests us here is that, in some form, it aims always at the exclusive possession of the child, — his exclusive companionship, or service, or attention; and of course he cannot exclusively serve both parents at the same time. Yet from this it by no means follows that, in another case, very distinctly individualistic meanings of both parents may not be fully realized in the child. The moral ideals of the two parents may be



totally different. The mother may above all things desire her grown son to be the object of general admiration, respect and good will; the father may be interested chiefly and exclusively in the development of capacity in his business or profession; yet it is easily conceivable that both may be abundantly satisfied,—not at different times and in different places, but concordantly, at all times and in every act. And it is further conceivable that in his personal relations to his very different parents he may with perfect sincerity be at all times a joy to both. Let us take another illustration, this time from the field of commerce. I suppose that no one would deny that under present conditions the interests of different individuals in the commercial world are in the nature of the case more or less hostile. When you buy meat of the butcher his interest is represented in the highest price and yours in the lowest. Yet your individual meanings are not wholly at variance. For, apart from other things, it is clear that he wants your money and you want his beef. So far, then, the aims of both are realized in the single transaction of purchase and sale. And realized, let us note, not in spite of their difference, but because of it; for if both aims were alike neither would be benefited in the slightest degree by the presence of the other in his world. This, then, is my first point: in the world of mechanical fact all individual differences are mutually hostile, and each individual body can only displace another, but in the world of conscious meaning any number of individual meanings may conceivably all be satisfied, if properly adjusted, in one act performed at one time and at one place. In other words, meanings may overlie and interpenetrate each other, but possessions never.

§ 18. In this suggestion of adjustment we arrive at



the next point, which is also the central point. The illustrations just given have assumed, of course, a certain preliminary basis of mutual fitness — a preestablished harmony, if you please — in the interests to be harmonized. The question now arises, What of those more numerous other cases where, apparently at least, no issue is possible which will not involve a certain failure of fulfilment on one side or the other, or on both? Such cases are too familiar to require present illustration. Must we not admit, then, that life is for the most part made up of situations where, to a greater or less extent, the incompatibility of individual aims is final and definitive, and where no perfect or complete harmony of interests is, humanly speaking, possible? To one making this objection I should reply, "Humanly speaking," yes. And the aim of all the later lectures will be to define the nature and extent of the qualifications which this phrase implies. But at present my answer must be, Logically speaking, no. If you are speaking of the aims of self-conscious beings, then, by all the logic of consciousness, however hopelessly incompatible they may appear to be, they may and must still be regarded as *essentially* in harmony. And because, as we shall now see, it is implied in the very idea of a conscious being, as something without which he cannot be conceived to be conscious, that, just in so far as he is conscious and knows what he is doing, his activity is adjustable to that situation in which he finds himself, so as to realize his purposes then and there without deviation from their special individual meaning. Here we may see why it was so necessary to make it clear that self-adjustment could not be asserted of any purely mechanical structure. For self-adjustment presupposes as its necessary condition the presence of consciousness,



while on the other hand the very essence of consciousness is its power of adjustment.

§ 19. To make the conceptual relation clear let us take a simple and very crude illustration. Think, for example, of a runaway locomotive. Information has been telegraphed along the line and half a mile ahead a switch has been opened, by means of which the locomotive will be ditched and wrecked. Now why does the locomotive persist in its path toward inevitable destruction? A physicist will tell you, quite correctly, that its action is the mathematical resultant of certain forces acting in certain directions. A very naïve and unscientific mind might hazard the explanation that "it doesn't know any better." My point would be that the two explanations are concordant and both are concordantly right; and I should hold that the second explanation is for its purpose, and for our present purpose, as significant as the first. For what is always to be remembered, and what is nearly always forgotten, is that when we explain any action, be it that of a man or a machine, as the resultant of mechanical forces, we at the same time imply that it is *not* teleological, *not* purposive, *not* conscious. If this implication is not present the term "mechanical" has lost its meaning. The physical scientist deals chiefly with a world of objects to which consciousness is never attributed. He is apt to forget that unconsciousness is a factor in his problem, just because this unconsciousness is so universally assumed. And thus he arrives easily at the position that the mechanical forces would work out their inevitable result even if the object were conscious. Let him, however, thoughtfully face the meaning of his position; let him once assume that consciousness is present in his mechanism, and that it is a reality and no mere appear-



ance; then I say that he can no longer hold that consciousness makes no difference. And this means that the future of the object before him is no longer mechanically inevitable. For the very inevitableness of the mechanical outcome presupposes that the action is not conscious. Conceive, for example, that the locomotive of our illustration knows where it is and whither it is bound (and disregard the crudity of the assumption); you cannot then conceive that it should still unresistingly follow the path of certain destruction. Any consciousness that you assume implies a certain measure of self-control and self-adjustment for self-valuable ends.

§ 20. But our chief concern is with social relations. Let us proceed, then, to a still cruder illustration. Imagine two such locomotives approaching each other on the same track. I say now that you cannot conceive them to know what they are doing without conceiving them to adjust their actions for mutual advantage. For consider what it means to say of anything that it knows what it is doing. Our two locomotives, by hypothesis, do not know. This means, for them, that neither knows the other. Accordingly, neither acts *with reference to* the other. Each, so to speak, lives in a world which includes only itself, and each acts just as it would act if the other were non-existent. All this is implied in the very "blindness" of their mechanical nature, which means that the presence of others in their path makes no difference in their present action. But now let them know. A crude psychology might suggest that each might still know solely itself. But if you knew only yourself, where, what, and who would you be? And what would you really be doing? The most elementary condition of knowing yourself is that you know yourself *as one in a world with others*. Not necessarily any



human others. Robinson, spontaneously generated on his island, must have known himself as some sort of living being in contrast to the presumably lifeless objects of the physical world about him, and in some sort as a human being in contrast to the plants and animals. But to know yourself as a human individual and a person you require the contrast of your fellow-men. Only by contrast to them do you know who you are, and only by contrast to their aims and what they are doing do you know what you yourself are doing. And so that very consciousness which reveals to you yourself and your own aims, reveals the presence and the aims of others. Not merely do you know them as so many bodies moving in space. If that is all, you hardly know them at all. And in this sense you would not even know yourself. But just so far as you know what it is to be yourself a living being, engaged in the realization of plans, purposes and ideals, so far do you find yourself in a world with other living beings, whose actions are made intelligible to you by an appreciation of the purposes at which they aim.

But when you have thus found yourself in a world with others your situation is thereby completely changed. Your purpose cannot now be to move blindly ahead like a locomotive or a cannon-ball, for a purpose so expressed involves its own defeat. Unconsciously, as a creature of habit or prejudice, you might pursue this course, but self-consciously never. Even if the obstacles in your path were things of wood or stone, of which your knowledge were purely external, or supposing that your knowledge of your human obstacles were of this purely external sort, unillumined by any conception of intelligible purpose, still the fact that they stand in your way, that fact alone as a fact known by you, must involve a cer-

tain readjustment of your course of action, a certain harmony between yourself and the world, in order in any measure to realize your own aims. In other words, any consciousness whatever is forever bound to make a difference in the direction of adjustment. But when the consciousness is of your fellow-man the difference becomes immensely more significant. For not merely do you know him, he also knows you. And not merely can you adjust to him, he can also adjust to you. And the knowledge of each is no longer the knowledge of a merely external object. For by the fact that you are both conscious, you are now *in communication*, whereby each is enabled to view the world before him, his relation to mechanical objects and his relation to his human fellows, not merely from his own point of view but equally from the point of view of the other.

But this fact of communication involves important practical consequences. When you encounter an obstacle in your path, say, a tree, you avoid it and that is the end of the matter. But when you come into contact with your fellow-man it will not pay you merely to avoid him. By the fact that he also is a conscious being, and capable of coming to terms with you, the logic of the situation is completely altered, and the problem is now not merely to leave each party free to move but to cooperate for positive mutual advantage. If, now, you will consider all these details, if you will but reflect upon the multiplicity of reciprocal relations which are involved in the mere fact that each party to the situation knows what he is doing, you will find, I think, that this conclusion is unavoidable, and that the contrary is positively inconceivable, — namely, that by the same logic by which I, seeing a tree in my path, must be conceived to avoid that tree, so must you and I, as conscious of



ourselves and conscious of each other in a social situation, be conceived so to adjust our actions for mutual profit as to secure perfect harmony and perfect individual freedom; and if the harmony be in any measure incomplete, if it be tainted by any measure of compromise or mutual self-sacrifice, then you must say that, so far, we do not yet fully know ourselves or each other.

§ 21. And therefore, when we are confronted with a case, where, as it seems, two purposes do in fact conflict, and where to all appearances the conflict is hopeless and inevitable, we shall be compelled to deny that the purposes in question are yet fully self-conscious. In other words, they are not truly purposive. For it lies in the very conception of purpose, as the purpose of a self-conscious agent, to be infinitely adjustable while ever self-identical. And here once more we have the essential point of contrast between a purposive and a purely mechanical action. Two billiard-balls converging upon the same point are bound to collide because each, absolutely at the mercy of the present force, knows of no other way. Two men, purposing to occupy the same chair, are similarly bound to collide, if, like the billiard-balls, they are at the mercy of the present stimulus. But if either is capable of reflection — that is to say, if the point of view of either extends beyond the present moment — then collision is no longer inevitable. One of them will discover, very likely, another mode of behavior which will serve his purpose just as well, if not better. And this will make it clear that his purpose was not, after all, definitely determined to that particular object. Such, indeed, is our common human experience. Reflection never leaves a purpose just where it was, even while it reveals more clearly the fact of a consistently individual purpose. And though reflection

seems only to confirm your original choice, yet it is never quite the same choice. You may say, "If I had it to do over again I would do the same thing," *e.g.*, insist upon having that chair. Yes, but insistence from your present point of view would include some suggestion for the convenience of the other man. And to this extent it may be said that a larger consciousness of the situation has indeed resulted in the discovery of some other way. Now it may be that within our human experience the other way is never discovered. The disappointed lover may feel to the end of his life that he missed his one chance of happiness. But this in no wise invalidates our statement of the logical relations. For obviously he has a very limited knowledge of possible other ways for him. And just this is true of all of our human knowledge. Because of its limitations we can never definitively assert of a given case that there was no other way. But in the meantime we can with confidence assert that every larger consciousness of a given situation does in fact reveal a larger range of choice, through which an individual purpose may be adjusted to a larger variety of other purposes and at the same time be fulfilled in harmony with itself.

§ 22. In these *conscious relations* of conscious beings we have, then, the true ground of the idealistic theory of social relations. The idealistic theory holds that the interests of human individuals are essentially in harmony. But this harmony, we may now see, is not divinely preestablished. It does not rest upon the opaque fact that man is a political animal. Nor is it the hereditary derivative of a common human ancestry, nor on the other hand of a "social" education, — nor, again, of a mysterious "consciousness of kind." It exists, so far as it exists, solely by virtue of the fact that



men are conscious beings and therefore *know themselves and one another*. Consciousness does not, then, simply reveal a unity already implicit in our mechanical structure and therefore inevitable in the outcome; consciousness creates a unity which, but for consciousness, would in no sense exist. Nor does consciousness secure its unity by a mutual concession of individual claims. The need of such concession presupposes a mechanical view of the social situation. And the unity of mutual concession is not a true unity. It is a unity only in the Pickwickian sense, — in the same sense in which the Romans claimed to have "pacified" their rebellious provinces. According to the logic of the idealistic view the unity to be secured by conscious adjustment involves nothing less than the complete fulfilment of all individual purposes. Given any two beings, A and B. Let them have ends which, mechanically, are as conflicting and as hostile as you please. Then let them become fully conscious of their ends. According to the logic of idealism these ends will then both be fully realized.

§ 23. This extreme form of statement may seem at first glance to place the idealistic theory beyond the range of rational consideration. But in reality it states nothing more than the logical consequence of a doctrine which is current in daily thought. Our common sense believes that the intelligence which enables us to adjust our actions to our physical environment should enable us all the more to adjust our actions to each other. It is a common saying that two intelligent beings ought not to quarrel like cats and dogs. And in our more philosophical moments we doubt whether, for truly intelligent and self-conscious beings, there could be just cause for any hostility whatever. No doubt this thought is encumbered with the notion of mutual concessions.



Yet at the same time it stands for more. For when the adjustment is effected without the need of concession we note a superior intelligence. And it is the crowning distinction of men, as a race of rational and self-conscious beings, that for them such adjustments are possible. All this is implied in our common view. We assume, indeed, that human intelligence has its practical limits. But we also have in mind the conception of an intelligence which exceeds these limits. And we simply express the essential attribute of intelligence when we say that for God all things are possible; for a perfect intelligence all problems are soluble.

§ 24. I have presented so far only a bare scheme of conscious social relations. The lectures to follow will as far as possible fill in the details and develop the meaning of these ideas for our practical social life. But before passing further I wish to anticipate an objection which you are probably now ready to offer. For I fancy I hear you saying: "Yes, you have developed the harmony; but a harmony of rather a strange and uninspiring kind, — a mathematical rather than a musical harmony. For what you offer is really only a neatly scientific adjustment of cold-blooded, calculating beings. You are very far from picturing that communion of noble souls united in love, which is the real object of our higher social and spiritual aspirations."

I have reserved an explicit answer to this objection for the Third Lecture, but for the present I will reply that whether you judge this conception of harmony to be noble and inspiring or cold-blooded and mean will depend upon the fineness and richness of the individual natures which you conceive to be thus harmonized. For clearness of analysis I have been obliged to choose rather crudely mechanical illustrations, whose analogues in



human life would be found chiefly in the relatively impersonal issues of the market-place. Here, without doubt, the harmony of interests wears the aspect of a cold-blooded, scientific adjustment. But let the interests in question be as personal as you please, and let the harmony of interests be spiritually perfect; I say that the principle of harmony is still the same as before, only now for the first time fully realized as a harmony of personally concrete ends. For if your communion of souls be a real communion — if it be not merely an all-absorbing ecstacy of emotion or a blind rage of sexual excitement — it can be a communion only of natures that are individually distinct. And if you reply that now, however, there is no distinction of individuals, since each has made the interests of the other wholly his own, I shall return the answer that, in the sense in which that could be true here, it is true also, only less completely, of the relations of men in the market-place. For so far as you find it important to deal with your fellow in any relation, so far are you obliged to take account of his plans and purposes and to include them as far as possible in the problem you are trying to solve. Even in the business world it is important to understand the point of view of the other man, and once understood, you cannot treat it with indifference. But in the field of intimate personal relations the interests to be coordinated are vastly more subtle and complex; the aspects of mutual relationship are there inconceivably delicate, inconceivably numerous and involved; and any completed harmony of interests is now a thing of beauty. Just because of this complexity of relationship the interests of your fellow are now your very intimate personal concern. Only, not because they are identical with your own, but because of their intimate *response*

to your own. For it must not be forgotten that in loving we love always another. He whom you love is never merely the reflection of yourself but your spiritual complement and counterpart. And perfect love is simply a perfect mutual response between perfectly individual beings.



V The Two Conceptions of Nature

For each of the alternative conceptions of the individual and of the social order there will be found, as I have suggested, a corresponding conception of nature, a brief consideration of which will occupy us in this closing section. We shall see, indeed, that our materialistic and idealistic points of view represent two systems of ideas, each coherent in its way, in which the conceptions of the individual, of society, and of nature are correlative and mutually determining. Yet the introduction of the conception of nature is not for the sake of mere formal completeness, but for the elucidation of certain important points in the conception of social relations.

§ 25. You have already noted the intrusion of the question of environmental conditions into that of social relations. In our analysis of the mechanical view it was pointed out that the environment is there assumed to be a perfectly definite quantity. And in our idealistic analysis of a case of conflicting interests, you may have asked, — in spite of the argument offered — "What if there really be no other way? In other words, granting all the intelligence you please, does the matter finally rest with intelligence? Has not the environment something to say?" For of course it will be obvious that every adjustment of individual interests involves a transaction with Nature, — that is to say, a process of controlling or manipulating the environmental conditions for the accommodation of both parties. But if Nature may refuse to be controlled; if she may say to us, "This and no other way is offered for the fulfilment of your individual purposes," and if the way be too narrow for both purposes, then of course the harmony

of interests is altogether meaningless, — and more than ever when it is conceived to demand complete individual satisfaction. Let us see, then, how our alternative conceptions respond to the question of environmental control.

§ 26. For the mechanical view there should be, in strict logic, no possibility of control. For control implies adjustment, and as we have noted, any adjustment whatever implies a certain degree of consciousness and meaning. But, here as before, we may refrain from driving our mechanical individual to his last logical ditch. Let us ask rather what measure of control he commonly claims for himself. Now, in the background of all economic analyses of value lies the conception of a scarcity of the means of subsistence. "At Nature's mighty feast," in Malthus' celebrated phrase, covers are not laid for everybody; and the guests who arrive late can secure subsistence for themselves only by dispossessing those already there. This fact of scarcity is held responsible for the phenomenon of value. If each could secure without sacrifice all that he ever desired, nothing would have a price. There would be no contrast between want and satisfaction, no basis for the comparison of different goods, and the question of worth or desirability would consequently never arise. Hence the whole question of individual interests arises out of the fact of "Nature's scanty supply"; and according to the mechanical view this scantiness is a fact to be reckoned with in all adjustments of social relations. Yet the fact that it is reckoned with presupposes that the situation is not altogether beyond control. It may be mitigated by intelligent distribution, or the quantity of goods may by cooperation even be increased. But these remedial measures have their strict limits, as ex-



pressed in the "law of diminishing returns." According to this law we arrive sooner or later — and for the more strictly mechanical view, sooner — at a point where increased expenditure of capital and labor upon land yields no further increase of product, — where, in other words, the supply of goods furnished by the environment has become a fixed and unalterable fact.

§ 27. The nature of this fact determines the nature of our social relations. For the mechanical view the environment is a fact of definitely limited capacity. As such it is not only similar in kind to the mechanical individual but his strictly logical correlate. For if the individual were indefinitely self-adjustable, and possessed an indefinite capacity for the reconstruction of his world, the world could of course offer no barriers to his satisfaction; otherwise we should have the contradiction of the irresistible force and the immovable body. As mechanical facts, however, the individual and his environment limit each other. But the environment, in limiting the individual, limits also the unity of individual interests; for this unity presupposes, as we have seen, that all interests may be fully satisfied; while the limited supply means that each is to be satisfied only at the expense of another; what you gain, I necessarily lose. On this assumption it is obvious that any real harmony of interests is both impossible and absurd.

§ 28. All this, you will see, simply fulfils the logic of the mechanical theory. For, as we have noted earlier, the essential feature of the mechanical world is that it is a world of determinate quantities. It consists of individuals of a determinate and fixed character; its social order is determined by the character of its individuals; and its environment is opposed to its individuals as a fixed and immovable fact. It is true that in working



out the conception the several elements are often loosely conceived. The individual is given a certain measure of freedom, society a certain measure of internal adjustability, and the environment a certain measure of elasticity. But even these measures have their narrow and final limits. The world may indeed be a sort of trunk whose capacity may be increased by skilful packing, but, like the trunk again, its maximum capacity is fixed. In this fixed capacity we have its essential feature and, as we shall now see, the essential point of contrast between the mechanical world and the world as conceived by idealism.

§ 29. We have noted that from the mechanical assumption of an ultimately fixed natural supply the economist deduces a law of diminishing returns. But for our common view this scarcity of supply is offset more or less by the factors of human skill and cooperation. From these, however, more especially from the latter, our economist deduces an opposite[4] law of increasing returns, which holds that the product is increased by industrial combination. Here, again, however, as in the case of the conception of scarcity, the full implications of the assumption are very imperfectly conceived. For while in the one case the scarcity is regarded as more or less remediable, — from considerations quite at variance with the logic which treats it as a finally fixed fact; so in the other case the advantages of combination are held to be essentially limited, — and again from considerations which simply contradict those from which we attribute to combination any advantage

[4] Professor H. J. Davenport holds that these laws are not opposite but deal with two sets of unrelated facts; and he therefore re-names them as follows: the law of proportion of factors; the law of advantage and size. See *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. XXIII, August, 1909.



whatever. The truth is that the common view, and even the economic view, is not strictly logical. It simply notes that the scarcity of supply is not absolute, while on the other hand combination is not absolutely effective, without investigating the assumptions regarding the world and the individual upon which either could be asserted as true.

§ 30. Now, according to the logic of idealism, for the cooperation of intelligent and self-conscious beings the law of increasing returns is a strictly universal law. Such cooperation is not exclusively a social fact. It is rather, as will appear in our next lecture, a conscious fact. For at its lowest terms the conception of the conscious individual is of one who in some degree cooperates with himself. As a conscious individual Peter of today considers the needs of Peter of tomorrow and Peter of tomorrow carries out the plans of Peter of today. Only to the extent that this is true is Peter a conscious agent, and only to this extent is his consciousness effective in producing results. And when Peter of today and tomorrow form a similar relation with Peter of the day after the effectiveness is so far increased. The same holds true when Peter forms a partnership with Paul. I suppose it may be said that, even on terms of the lowest intelligence, such an alliance will stand for a certain increase of the combined product. The amount of increase will then be a function, in the mathematical sense, of the extent to which each is aware of his own purposes and at the same time of the purposes of his partner. And when a third partner is introduced the *per capita* as well as the total output will be still further increased in a corresponding degree, — provided, of course, the mutual understanding is now as complete as before. And so, for the logic of idealism, this law of



increasing returns is, for the cooperation of conscious beings, a strictly universal law. It is a law derived from the nature of consciousness itself, and apart from consciousness it has no validity whatever. But for the cooperation of conscious agents it is true without limit. If all conscious beings worked together in perfect mutual understanding there could remain no individual purpose not fully satisfied. If, then, you claim that the law is contradicted by the facts of economic life — if, for example, you show that the advantages of organization disappear after a certain size is reached — your idealist will reply that at that point there is also a decrease of mutual understanding among the several parties to the combination. He may be unable to explain why mutual comprehension should be more difficult for a multitude of agents than for two or three; that, of course, is but one aspect of the general limitations of our consciousness. In any case he will still be able to hold that for conscious cooperation the *per capita* output is in forever ascending ratio.

§ 31. According to this view the environment of self-conscious agents is not a fixed fact, but an indefinitely elastic fact. And this assumption is indispensable to the idealistic doctrine of an essential harmony of interests. I have stated the situation in terms of "increasing returns" of consumable goods, because in these terms the relations are most easily formulated. But you will readily see that in its final significance the law is much more abstract. It will then stand, not alone for increase of goods, but for increase of opportunity, — of freedom of choice and movement. Only as you assume that our environment may be enlarged, and its opportunities increased, by mutual understanding and cooperation, can you affirm an essential harmony of interests.



And only as you assume this can you affirm that our consciousness is in any way effective. If you and I are enclosed within a narrow space, so that your being in the world restricts my freedom of choice and movement, it is idle to say that our interests are essentially harmonious. And if our consciousness can do naught but recognize the situation, the harmony is not thereby increased. I may, indeed, find it advisable not to crowd you too far; but this will be far from making your interests my own. For all the time I should be better off if I could get rid of you altogether. Only as your being in the world makes my world larger can your interests be genuinely mine. But this will never be unless our world is made actually larger by mutual understanding and cooperation.

§ 32. And so, where the mechanical view offers us an individual, a social order and an environment which are strictly determinate and limited, idealism offers a world in which these terms are strictly unlimited and indeterminate. Yet none the less are they strictly correlative. For the idealistic environment is not just anything you please. It is a term to be defined with reference to the individual or group of individuals who propose to deal with it. In the mathematical sense, it is a function of our knowledge of it,—a useful instrument as far as we have knowledge, as far as we are ignorant a source of resistance. But this knowledge of the world is again a function of our self-knowledge. For to say that a given object possesses such and such a character is to say what we can or cannot do with it; and this, again, is to state the nature and extent of our own capacities and powers. The environment is thus coordinate with the nature of the agent. Yet the two are not mutually restrictive. For we are not now dealing



with a reality conceived as a fixed and determinate whole, so that none of its constituents can expand except at the expense of another.[5] Rather is our reality such that the self-expansion of any one element involves the corresponding expansion of every other, and infinite self-expansion is a property coordinately potential to all the members of the system.

§ 33. When the logic of the idealistic view is thus revealed, it is easy to see why the idealist is in general an unconditional optimist, why he can place no limits to the possible realization of the individual self and none, again, to the essential harmony of individual interests. If you suggest to him that we are "up against" Nature, he can reply that whether we are against Nature or with her — or whether Nature is against or with us — depends upon the extent to which we act self-consciously and intelligently, — upon the extent, in other words, to which we know what we are doing. And he can point out very readily that Nature is nothing of herself and offers nothing of herself. Iron ore for the primitive man and iron ore for the modern chemist are two very different things. The opportunities and satisfactions of the ancient world were limited by very imperfect means of communication. Yet the materials of which we construct our modern telegraphs and steamships were in the earth then as now. In reality nothing has changed but man. And the change in man has been a growing consciousness of himself. As the result of this the history of the race has been a continuous process of making the world in which we live larger, more fruitful, and more commodious. At each advance it has been proclaimed that the limit of expansion had been reached, — or would at any rate be reached in the proximate future. But

[5] *E.g.*, as assumed in the law of conservation of energy.



any assertion of a limit, whether proximate or remote, presupposes that nature is a fixed quantity and that her character is independent of the intelligence with which she is approached. If, however, the possibilities of the world over against us are a function of ourselves, the notion of a limit falls at once to the ground. For now, if you would define the ultimate possibilities of progress, you must at the same time define the ultimate limits of our nature and possibilities as conscious agents. And this of course is a very different task from that of calculating the strength of a girder or the horse-power of an engine. For that matter you can hardly take up the task without discovering that, as Professor Royce has shown, consciousness by its very nature is unlimited and infinite. For assume that you have finally stated the limits of your conscious self. Any such statement involves a view of something beyond; and therefore in that very statement you will be occupying, and speaking from, a larger point of view than that of the self you set out to define. This expansion of your point of view is a further expansion of yourself; and this, like every previous expansion, will mean that your capacity for dealing with the world before you is one more point enlarged.

§ 34. At the beginning of our theoretical analysis I stated that our two abstract conceptions of man, nature and the social order would serve in some sort as standards, or dimensions, by means of which we may estimate the concrete fact. Only, in contrast to the spatial dimensions, they mark the opposite poles — or, better, the opposite directions — of a continuous series of differences. In the development of our conceptions I have endeavored to suggest the manner of their application, and also the varying extent to which each is true of actual



life. For if we should ask now which of these two systems of thought furnishes a true explanation of concrete human life, the answer would evidently be: both,—and also neither. Of any concrete situation both are coordinately true, each as the obverse of the other. Our next lecture will develop this thesis in detail. I shall endeavor to show that so far as the individual is truly a conscious being, so far may we assert of him as a fact all that is claimed for him, in his relations to society and to nature, by the idealistic philosophy. But on the other hand I shall point out that so far as we are not truly conscious, so far are we in fact confined to the limits marked out for us by the mechanical theory of the universe; so far are we in truth essentially limited beings, doomed to mutual hostility and to a servile fear of Nature. And we shall see that the range and intensity of our present human consciousness is not conspicuously great.

§ 35. Yet the mere combination of these two forms of statement, as aspects of a situation in which each is the obverse side of the other, may suggest that the present limitations of our conscious life are not once for all fixed. And so, in closing this First Lecture, I may venture to point ahead to the meaning of all this for our theory of individualism, and the sort of individualism which this is intended to establish. In one form or another some consideration of the individual is involved in every theory of conduct. Even those who insist most strongly upon the social welfare, or the common good, as the final and sole measure of moral value teach that the social welfare, to constitute a moral aim, must be freely chosen. And probably they would admit that, in last analysis, any end which the individual can be obliged to seek must be in some sense his own. The



result, however, is, for them, the so-called "ethical paradox." The individual is told that his act must be one of free, personal choice and at the same time warned that his personal choice must be to sacrifice himself for the good of society. Any compensation for himself must be found in the "beauty of self-sacrifice." To my mind this is indeed a paradox, — that is to say, it is nonsense. For myself I can see no beauty in self-sacrifice. In a later lecture I trust I may be able to make evident the beauty of an attitude of generosity and open-mindedness, but this is quite another thing. And the aim of these lectures is to show that not only is the conception of self-sacrifice in itself a sentimental and unintelligent formulation of the moral ideal, but that it rests upon a misconception of ourselves as conscious beings. It elevates into a moral and social ideal a condition which must be regarded as due to an imperfection of our nature. As merely mechanical and only imperfectly self-conscious beings our individual interests are indeed hostile, and the combination of self-interest and social welfare is paradoxical enough; but the obligation of self-sacrifice is then equally paradoxical. As conscious beings, however, we are entitled to the full expression of our individual natures. So much is involved in the fact and meaning of our consciousness. But as conscious beings it is our distinctive prerogative that we may reach a condition of mutual sympathy and understanding, which not only dispenses with self-sacrifice, but presupposes, and at the same time secures, through intelligent cooperation and adjustment, among ourselves and with Nature, a perfect individual freedom.





LECTURE II

THE INDIVIDUAL AS A CONSCIOUS AGENT





LECTURE II

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I The Conception of Consciousness

In our last lecture we looked upon two pictures of the individual: the mechanical individual whose opportunities are diminished and restricted by the presence of others in his world; the conscious, or spiritual, individual for whom the presence of others means a larger and freer world. In the present lecture we are to see in these two pictures the obverse aspects of any concrete individual, and at the same time of any concrete social situation. But not quite immediately. It may seem that for our special purpose we have already wandered sufficiently in remote metaphysical fields, yet I must ask you to join me in one more such expedition before we settle down to a contemplation of the concrete fact. For if we are to speak intelligently of the various degrees of consciousness we must approach the situation with a conception of consciousness more or less clearly formulated.

§ 36. If you should ask an empirical psychologist for a definition of consciousness you would very likely learn that for our human understanding consciousness is an ultimate, to be accepted as a fact, but not to be defined. As Wundt says, *das Bewusstsein lässt sich nicht definieren.* I shall not pause to comment upon the erroneous logic which delights in such ultimates,



and makes the reduction to the ultimate a necessity of any definition. It will be sufficient to point out that as a matter of fact consciousness is being constantly defined. Whenever you note a general point of difference between a conscious person and an unconscious thing you offer, so far, a definition of consciousness. And this difference may be stated in a number of ways. Of these I propose to select for our purpose the one which is perhaps most widely current among philosophers, namely, that consciousness is a unity in diversity and a diversity in unity. The force of this definition is often weakened by a burden of emphasis upon the unity. We hear much of the unity of consciousness, rather less of its internal diversity. Men may go so far as to say that the world of consciousness is one while the mechanical world is many. This, however, misses the point. According to the definition before us the essential difference between the nature of consciousness and the nature of the mechanical world lies in this: that consciousness is both *one and many;* a mechanical reality may be one, or it may be many, as you may choose to consider it, but it can never be *both* many and one.

§ 37. At first glance you are likely to think that such a definition is both too abstract to be useful and too remote to be of use to us. Yet I hope to make it clear that the distinction which it draws is not only the most practical and comprehensible of all distinctions within our special field of discourse, but that which is most vital for an understanding of the individual and his social relations. Let us approach the matter as before with a crude illustration. I have here, let us say, four billiard-balls in a box which just contains them. Here we have a typical case of bare mechanical fact. Note,



then, the situation. As a purely mechanical object each billiard-ball is absolutely exclusive of every other. Its being is one of absolute isolation. It exists purely in and for itself, and it is what it is purely in itself. That is to say, the presence of the other balls in the box makes absolutely no difference. Remove it from the box and place it on the table, it is still just what it was. The "set" of balls is of course now broken; but the set is a fact for you, and not for the ball as it is in itself. As a strictly external and mechanical fact each ball is complete in itself and its being is independent of the being of any other.

But now, in place of our four billiard-balls substitute four corresponding ideas. And for convenience let us say that each ball has now an idea of itself, or in other words, is now aware of its own being and nature. What is the difference? If you accept the description of ideas to be found in the ordinary text-book of psychology the difference will not be very startling; for there, it would seem, ideas may be passed around in much the same way as billiard-balls, without losing their identity or changing their nature. But if you will note for yourself what is involved in the being of an idea you will discover that the difference is as broad as the world itself. For as the being of a billiard-ball involves extension in space, so does the being of an idea involve a meaning. An idea without a meaning is as little of an entity as a billiard-ball without spatial extension. But here again you may be somewhat at sea. For the text-books of psychology to which I have just referred may have told you that the meaning of ideas is not a quality of the ideas themselves but consists in the relations of ideas, and that the being of the idea itself is its "content." But what can you mean by "content"? The



content of a billiard-ball is perhaps the ivory of which it is made. But what is an idea made of? Not of any "stuff," analogous to the ivory of the billiard-ball. The sole content of an idea is what it means. An idea of blue is not itself blue, it means blue. And if it means nothing it *is* just nothing whatever.

Now, when we ask what is involved in the meaning of an idea, we find that the very meaning which constitutes the being of the idea itself includes a relation of comparison with other ideas. Billiard-ball number one knows itself. But what does it mean by itself? At the lowest terms it means itself as something which is not the other billiard-balls. But what are the characteristics of itself? Again, these are characters which belong to itself and not to the other balls. It knows itself as red while the others are white, or as here while they are there. And so, if ball number one knows itself, it must in any case know more than itself. Otherwise it knows nothing whatever, and there is no such idea in existence. And so of them all. Any idea of any one must include at least some idea of some others. Yet each one's idea of himself, as *himself*, must be different from the idea of him held by any other.

Accordingly, where material things, such as billiard-balls are by their very nature non-interpenetrable, so that each must remain wholly independent and exclusive of the other, ideas are by their very nature obliged to interpenetrate. Only as idea number one includes within itself, say, idea number two can it know and mean itself as idea number one. Or we may state the matter otherwise by saying that, where the billiard-ball maintains its identity, and its being, whether in the box or on the table, or whether in the box alone or with others, the idea has no identity and no being except



as its being includes that of other ideas *in the same mind*.[1]

§ 38. We require, however, a second illustration. Our first has dealt with a case of two coexistent terms regarded as things or as ideas. But the conscious life is very distinctly related to temporal succession. We shall see, then, that the same conception of consciousness applies to two terms conceived to be successive. Let us take our old illustration of the runaway locomotive and consider its situation at successive points in its career. So far as it is regarded as unconscious the locomotive of each moment is an isolated and independent fact. The locomotive of the present moment is quite unconcerned with itself of ten minutes ago. How it happened to run away, with what original supply of coal or water, or even pressure of steam, — these make no difference to the present locomotive. Its present action is a function purely of forces acting in the present. It matters not how these came to be what they now are; the locomotive responds only to what they are, and as long as they are sufficient it will con-

[1] It may be asked here whether what I have claimed for the ideas is not also true, in some degree, of the billiard-balls. Is not the billiard-ball governed by the laws of gravitation and conservation of energy? Is not its spatial location here and now determined by the fact that this location is otherwise unoccupied? In a word, is not the billiard-ball, like the idea, a term in a unitary system? No doubt it is. But this admission means only that our conception of an absolutely unconscious *thing* is inadequately illustrated, and that perhaps no adequate illustration is to be found. For if the several mechanical objects of our world are terms of one system it is pertinent to ask where the system is to be located. Not in the objects; for then the system would be, like the object, spread out over space, a part here and a part there, and the unity of these parts would be as much of a problem as ever. But if you say that the unity is implied in the nature of each part, I reply that the power of implication belongs only to ideas. It is true that we conceive,



tinue to run. It is equally unconcerned with the future. Whether the switch ahead of it is open or closed makes not the slightest difference in its present speed. As a mechanical object the locomotive of each moment exists wholly in and for itself, and the successive moments are as completely outside of each other as the several billiard-balls.

But now translate these several moments into ideas. Assume that at any moment the locomotive knows what it is doing and where it now is. You will see that this assumption implies at its minimum that the different moments are no longer absolutely isolated. For the idea of anything as present means nothing except in contrast with the idea of that thing as past, and also future. If you were ignorant of all beside the present you could never possibly state what you are now doing. For what you are now doing implies at its lowest terms an object toward which you are moving as your aim and a situation from which you have set out to accomplish that aim. If you blot out these past and future elements of contrast you will find that what you are now doing is something of which you can form no idea whatever. And so, of any purely mechanical fact we may

and indeed must conceive, our material world as a system. But this systematic character is for you and me who think about it and not for the things themselves. The more we undertake to disentangle the world from our mode of conceiving it the more it assumes the character of a mere multitude of independent and isolated things, such as the physical atoms. You may object that even this bare *thing* implies unity, contrast, and internal distinction. If so, this means to me only that the world cannot finally be disentangled from ourselves. In the meantime we are endeavoring to do this, and so far our distinction holds good, namely, that so far as the object of our thought is conceived as an idea it must be conceived as both identical with and diverse from other ideas, while so far as it is conceived as an unconscious, mechanical thing it must be conceived as independent of other things.



say that it is what it now is. And it is what it now is no matter what it has been or will be. In a word, no temporal moment of its being can penetrate any other. A mechanical fact is a finally hard, solid, opaque, and unyielding fact. But of any conscious fact, of any idea, we must say that the ideas of successive moments are bound to interpenetrate if the idea of any one moment is to have any meaning.

§ 39. From these considerations I trust it may be clear how that apparently vague and meaningless definition of consciousness as unity in diversity, or diversity in unity, expresses in reality the most fundamental and significant difference between the world of consciousness and the world in space and time. And now we may see how that which is for common sense a stumbling block and for science foolishness may be for us the wisdom of God. For what is most impossible for mechanical objects in space and time, namely, to be both one and many, both here and there, both now and then, — just that is for consciousness its truest and most essential feature. Time, as commonly conceived (not necessarily as conceived by mathematical theory) is a series of discrete "points," each of which lies outside of the others. The present moment is therefore a point without duration, that is to say, absolutely isolated from the past and future. So of space; "there" is absolutely excluded from "here." But not so the idea of a thing in space. This is obliged to be both here and there, if it is to *mean* either. And the same relation holds, even more significantly, of the idea of time. The usual empirical psychology, treating the mind as a material thing, divides our consciousness into a series of successive moments corresponding to the points of mechanical time. But as James has pointed out, the "specious



present," (the real present, he should have said) has always a sensible duration. It includes a past, present, and future within itself; and on lower terms than these we can be sensible of no time whatever. But the same is true, still more significantly, of moments more widely apart. I remember what happened yesterday, or last year, or perhaps thirty years ago. The empirical psychology tells me that I have now only a representative memory-image of that former event. But for the man who is remembering this is nonsense. What I remember is not an image of that event, but the event itself, and not as represented now, but as actually occurring then. And so far as I remember distinctly I am indeed not merely remembering, but literally living once more there and then as well as here and now. For physical science this is a mere paradox; for consciousness it is the truest statement of fact.

§ 40. But to come to a more concrete statement of the case, each of us exists, let us say, in a world of many diverse features and many diverse things, some of which are before us simultaneously, others in succession. At any moment each of these may be assumed to produce upon us its corresponding impression, — for no doubt the mere presence of an object before the eye must be conceived to produce some change in the eye, if not also in the brain. The empirical psychology translates these impressions into correspondingly separate and discrete mental states. But not so for you, of whom the states are supposed to be. Assume that you are now conscious of some object, say a particular chair in this room; you are certainly conscious of more. For except as your mental state which means the chair includes something else which you do not mean, it cannot even mean the chair; in a word, if you are conscious of the chair alone,



you are not really conscious at all. On the other hand, if you are very distinctly conscious of the chair, as most explicitly this chair, and not that, nor that other, and certainly not the door nor the window, or what not, then your present consciousness of the chair includes each and all of those other objects which you explicitly exclude from your meaning. And further, if you have an idea of this present situation, as uniquely present, of which no other could be an exact duplicate, then, again, if your consciousness of the present is distinct and explicit it must include all other situations in which you have been or may expect to be. But at least some other situations must be included if you are to be conscious of the present at all. And so once more, while the things that you know are here or there, now or then, your knowing of them must ever be both.

§ 41. But our consciousness is not a bare idea of an object; every idea is also an aim and an ideal. We do not merely know; every knowing is at the same time an act of will and purpose. I have so far used the language of mere knowing because for our special purpose it was easier. But now it will be clear, I hope, that what has been asserted simply of ideas is true without qualification of the concrete conscious life. And in passing to this broader view I trust I am beginning to make clear, to bring above the horizon, so to speak, the meaning of all this analysis for our conception of conscious individuality. For nothing is more deeply involved in the question of your personality than the possibility of your being one and the same person in the many acts of your life. Now, for the empirical psychology, you are not one but many. In resolving your knowledge into a number of separate ideas, it also resolves your will, or activity, into a number of separated



impulses, related only as coexistent or successive in an order of time. In other words, you, the person, are a bundle of instincts, each of which in last analysis is a neural reflex, a predetermined arrangement of the nervous system by which you respond to each specific object, or stimulus, with a specific reaction, — just, indeed, as the type-writer responds with a specific letter for each key touched. But in the light of our previous analysis you will see that such isolated responses are all the world different from the aims of a conscious agent. The type-writer responds with a given letter because the mechanism for writing that letter is an independent mechanical fact. In writing that letter your type-writer knows nothing and cares nothing about the other letters to be written, and it will misspell your word as cheerfully as it will spell the word correctly. But no conscious response to a stimulus can be thus independent, — or, if so, the response is not conscious. Suppose that you are so constructed that an invitation to a good dinner prompts you immediately to accept. If the stimulus is so overwhelming that it crowds out everything else and makes you forget all your other plans and engagements, then I say that your acceptance of the invitation is in no sense a conscious act. You are not even conscious of the promised dinner. For if you have forgotten everything else you have also forgotten that, and you are in the position of one hypnotized, or of one whom a stunning piece of good fortune has reduced to insensibility.

§ 42. At its lowest terms, then, a conscious aim can never be exclusive. Like the idea, it is both itself and at the same time includes aims other than itself. It is an aim always to do this *with reference to* that. Not, however, *for the sake of* that. For here we have to note



what I conceive to be perhaps the most significant implication of our conception of consciousness. The revolt against the depersonalizing tendencies of the empirical psychology is commonly expressed in the assertion that consciousness is selective. By this it is meant that as conscious beings we are able to take an all-at-once view of our several aims and by comparison to give the better the right of way over the worse. And thus, by virtue of our consciousness, we are enabled to assert ourselves in a personal choice, and the impulse of the present moment is no longer absolutely determining. Now I hold that consciousness is indeed selective. And we shall see presently that it is the more conscious life which succeeds in bringing to fruition the greater number of its several aims. But the function of a conscious activity is not merely to select one aim *to the exclusion of* another, or to do one thing merely for the sake of another. If our definition is to be taken literally such exclusiveness, or even preference, of aims would partake of the nature of an unconscious, mechanical movement, in which one object is displaced, or more or less displaced, in the attainment of another. The characteristically conscious selection, however, would be, not the selection of one of your aims by rejection of another, but the selection of that act which would completely realize all of your aims as opposed to any act by which any of them would be left even partially unrealized.

Now I hold that our definition is to be taken in its strictest and most literal sense. Only as thus interpreted does it give us the genuine *differentia* of a conscious act. We have seen that mechanical facts are mutually exclusive in space and time. The same characteristic belongs to a mechanical act. A purely



mechanical movement can grasp, or possess, only one, and that the present, object to the exclusion of all others. But it is the characteristic of conscious facts to be mutually *in*clusive, to be genuinely many at the same time that they are genuinely one. To act consciously is therefore to do this with reference to that; yet not to do this for the sake of that, not to sacrifice this aim for that, not to give that the right of way over this; but to choose that course of action which will attain both. It is just this possibility of inclusive selection that distinguishes the conscious act; it is just this that makes thinking worth while; and so far as any exclusiveness remains the act is not yet perfectly conscious.

Suppose that you receive an invitation to dinner. On first thought you say, "Alas! I can't go. I have something else to do." But upon second and more reflective thought you ask whether you cannot so arrange your program as to do both. Suppose you succeed. Your consequent decision to accept now embodies just the sort of aim which is characteristic of a conscious agent. That is to say, it includes and fulfils two aims which, except for your act of reflection, would have been mutually incompatible and exclusive. Of course you may fail. The problem of reconciling the two ends may be too difficult for solution within your present opportunities for reflection; it may even refuse to yield to further subsequent reflection. But this means only that your grasp of the situation is incomplete, not that the two aims are shown to be absolutely self-contradictory. For that would imply perfect clearness of vision, and — paradoxical as it may seem — perfect control; for simply to understand what a thing will do or will not do is to find a way of making it do what you



want. But the situation which now confronts you is a matter of opaque fact which you can neither control nor fully understand, and in which it remains always possible that a clearer insight into the nature of the conditions and a more perfect self-consciousness with regard to the exact meaning of your aims would solve the problem and realize both your aims with perfect individual completeness.

The whole matter may then be formulated as follows: Mechanically determined actions may be, and except by chance will be, absolutely exclusive. If, for example, you leave the attainment of ends A and B to the mercy of unregulated impulse, or habit, it will be the merest good luck if the attainment of one does not put the other absolutely out of the question. If, however, your action be in the slightest degree conscious the incompatibility of the two ends will be so far reduced. But you will not be fully conscious, you will not finally know what you are doing, until your conduct is such as to realize both ends, each with individual completeness, all at once.

§ 43. Nor, until you do this, will you be in the final sense an individual person. For the meaning of all this is that it is your consciousness that makes you an individual person, that and nothing else. It may be necessary to have an individual body, separated from other bodies, and a continuous organic life; but these are mere adjuncts of personality. They might be the same body and the same life, but never, merely as such, the same person, nor in the final sense the *same*. For they would be the same only for others, for those who might know them; in themselves, however, so many temporally and spatially isolated mechanical facts. The only manifold that can be in itself the same is a conscious manifold,



— a self-conscious manifold. As a physical being you may be here or there, yesterday or today, but here, there, yesterday, and today are so many isolated facts. As a conscious being you are necessarily both here and there, both yesterday and today. You are therefore literally the same, and the same in the only sense in which any manifold of terms and aspects can ever be really the same, — the same individual person.

§ 44. But the immediate purpose of this definition of consciousness is to arrive at some clear conception of what is meant by the several degrees of consciousness. We have seen that to fail in any degree to realize your several ends is to be so far not fully conscious and not in the full sense a person. But, now, what would it mean to be a conscious person in the full sense of the phrase? The answer, I fear, will be staggering. Suppose that our coming here today is for each of us a fully conscious act. Then I say that it must be an act which not only satisfies, and fully satisfies, our purposes in coming here now, but at the same time satisfies, and fully satisfies, every other purpose of our present lives. In other words, the act of coming here now must express a decision which embodies all our present interests. If any side of our nature, any possible want, has been forgotten or disregarded, our act is so far lacking in consciousness; so far we do not in the full sense know what we are doing. But this is not all. If the act is to be fully conscious it must embody, not only all of our present purposes, but all the purposes of the past and all of our possible purposes of the future. In a word, the fully conscious act is that which embodies in the choice of that moment all the issues of one's life; and the fully conscious life is that which is illumined at every moment by a perfectly clear vision of the purposes of that life



as a whole. On this basis of definition it is obvious that none of us is ever fully conscious. Nay, it is clear that we must be for the most part woefully blind and unconscious. But this is precisely the point which my definition is intended to reach. Human consciousness is all the world removed from that of the lower animals; yet it is time that we rouse ourselves from our "dogmatic slumber" in the notion that as human beings we are conscious once for all. For consciousness, as we shall now see, forms an infinitely graduated and indefinitely extended scale. Even among human beings there are enormous differences in the degree to which life is consciously lived; and from any absolute standpoint, or even from the maximum conceivable from our present point of view, the unconsciousness of human life as a whole is as conspicuous and significant a feature as the consciousness itself. We shall see that this unconsciousness has an important bearing upon the conception of the individual and the theory of social relations.



II The Degrees of Consciousness

One of the conspicuous results of evolutionary ways of thinking has been the gradual but rapid disintegration of absolute distinctions. The older way of thinking, which is still the way for the majority of men, was expressed in the law of excluded middle. A must be either B or not-B. I am either a conscious being or an unconscious being. I either know or I do not know; there is no middle ground. But the theory of evolution has taught us to look for a middle ground everywhere, even between knowing and not-knowing. Nevertheless, the absolute dies hard. It retreats, indeed; it accepts a middle term; but then it proceeds to set up an absolute and ungraded distinction between its middle and end-terms. So, in the matter of consciousness, we have a distinction between consciousness and self-consciousness, or rather, the graded series of unconsciousness, subconsciousness, consciousness and self-consciousness, each of which is supposed to represent an absolutely distinct stage. It is one thing to know, and a very different thing to know that you know. It is one thing simply to be aware — to have a bare idea, or sense-impression, of an object, and quite another thing to subject your idea to reflective and critical analysis. The lower animals are conscious, but only man is self-conscious.

§ 45. I may begin, then, by observing that our conception of consciousness furnishes no basis for a distinction between consciousness and self-consciousness except as a distinction of degree. And for this important point, as for some others, I have no room for a special argument, but must leave it to be justified here and there in the course of the argument as a whole. For us the



distinction of consciousness and self-consciousness marks the difference between any higher term and any lower at any point in the scale. There can be no consciousness which is not also self-conscious in its own degree. Indeed, this element of selfhood is for us just that essential feature of consciousness whose absence characterizes the distinctively mechanical fact. For if you look more closely at the consciousness which is assumed not to be self-conscious you will recognize those substantive and isolated "mental states," to which I referred a while ago, and which, in their lack of further reference and meaning, are simply not conscious at all. I say, then, that awareness of anything involves so far, however vaguely, a corresponding awareness of self. For the merest awareness, to be aware of anything whatever, must be aware of this and that, and of this as different from that. Now any awareness of difference implies a comparison from a certain point of view, which for the present represents yourself. This point of view defines the nature of the difference of which you are aware. And you are aware of the nature of the difference, — in the degree, of course, of your awareness of the difference itself. If you have no awareness of the nature of the difference, you are aware of no difference; then, indeed, of nothing whatever. But we shall see these relations illustrated in what is to come.

§ 46. Keeping in mind, then, our conception of consciousness, let us now ask what we mean by saying that a given act of consciousness is "more conscious" than another. We might return to our original illustration of the billiard-balls, but a better illustration is offered in the facts of color-blindness. For if it means anything at all to be more conscious, the person of normal vision must surely be more conscious of the colors of the world



than his color-blind neighbor. Now, in the matter of color-blind vision, we may conveniently assume, with most color-theory of today, that the colors of the normal eye are mixtures in various proportions of the so-called primary colors, red, yellow, green, and blue. But for the most common type of color-blind eye it seems that the entire range of color-distinction can be covered by mixtures of blue and yellow only, — that is to say, the addition of red and green makes no difference. It is therefore common to say that while the normal eye perceives red, green, blue, and yellow, the color-blind eye perceives only blue and yellow.

But, now, what is the meaning of "blue" for the color-blind eye? It is surely not the blue of your normal eye; for your "blue" is known as different, not merely from some other color — for convenience, call it "yellow" — but from three other colors, distinguished from each other as yellow, green, and red. For this reason I say that your blue *means more*, and therefore that in perceiving blue you are conscious of more than the color-blind man and at the same time *more conscious*. If you lived in a world where "blue" marked a distinction from only one other (largely only "some other") color, then, although your "blue" would be spatially very pervasive, and would cover all that is now covered by blue and green, it would mean very little and have, as an idea, very little content. For in that world it would have of itself just one rather indefinite character, *i.e.*, as a "cold" color rather than a "warm." In your normal world it has at least three distinct characters, due to its contrast, individually, with yellow, green, and red. It is thus a richer and fuller object; your perception of it expresses a richer and fuller distinction; and in perceiving it you are both conscious of more, and more conscious.



This, you will see, is precisely the conception of a higher degree of consciousness which our general definition of consciousness would lead us to expect. For if consciousness is characterized by the relation of many in one, the higher degree of consciousness should be a case simply of *more in one*, — a greater and more varied multiplicity which is at the same time a richer and more complex unity. Assume once more that the billiard-ball of our illustration begins to know itself. At the lowest terms its idea of itself must include something other than itself. But the degree of meaning of this idea will then depend upon the variety and extent of those others which are thus embraced. For each new inclusion there is a fresh case of comparison and contrast, by virtue of which the idea acquires a new element of meaning and becomes a richer and more significant idea. And therefore, according to its range of comparison will the idea express much or little; and what it expresses is the measure of its degree of consciousness.

§ 47. This explains what we mean in common sense by the clearness of an idea. For common sense a more intensive consciousness of an object is said to be clearer and more distinct. But what is the meaning of "clearness" as applied to ideas? For the average empirical psychology the clearness of an idea is simply a crude metaphor, derived, say, from the clearness of a window-pane. That is to say, clearness belongs to ideas just as it does to window-panes, as a natural property not to be further analyzed. Yet a moment's reflection should show that the clearness of the idea (if not also of the window-pane) involves certain specific and easily definable relations. An idea is clear by virtue of its internal distinctness. And the measure of its distinctness is the number of distinctions which it expresses,



not successively, or serially, in mere logical order, but all at once in a single moment of thought. Thus an idea of blue has some clearness when it means a cold rather than a warm color; it is clearer when it means specifically not yellow, nor red, nor green; and it is still clearer when blue is finally located at a given point on the solar spectrum and is thus distinguished from every other variety of hue. In this process of clarification the color, the blue itself, has been confined within an ever narrower range. But the idea of blue has acquired an ever more inclusive, richer, and more individualized meaning.

§ 48. We come, then, to the meaning of these grades of consciousness for concrete mental life. Where mental life begins, if it anywhere begins, it is quite impossible to say. The earth-worm is apt to be the center of discussion in fixing the lower limit of consciousness. Let us assume, then, that the earth-worm is conscious. How it would seem to be an earth-worm we may not dare to guess. So much, however, we must affirm: if he is conscious of anything his consciousness of any moment covers more than just that point in space and time. If he even knows himself as creeping — and less he could hardly know — he is aware, however vaguely, of a difference between a now and a then, a here and a there, though a then of two minutes ago or a there of two feet away may be quite beyond his present range of comparison.

Between the worm and our intelligent friend, the dog, the difference of range of comparison must be very great. Yet little as compared with the difference between the dog and any normal man. As you sit by the fire with your dog on the hearth-rug before you, no doubt the dog looks as thoughtful as yourself; and a casual



observer might even credit him with a greater depth of reflection. Yet compare the probable reach of the two minds. Not forgetting where you now are, your mind turns, let us say, to events long past and at the same time lays plans involving to some degree the consideration of persons and places far away, yet linked to your present situation by a complex network of economic and personal implications. Does the dog lay plans? Does he remember his dinner of yesterday? Does he really anticipate in thought his dinner of today? And when he barks at the railway-train has he any notion of what he is barking at? Does he know, indeed, that there is a world beyond the range of his daily experience? Does he even grasp his world of today and yesterday as one world? These questions, I suppose, belong to the animal psychologist. Yet it requires no animal psychologist to tell us that the range of the dog's present thought must be extremely limited, whatever may be the possibility of recall in the presence of an associative cue. And therefore, in spite of his judicial demeanor and the liveliness of his behavior at certain times, we must conclude that the present object has for him a very limited significance, and that his mind is dull and vacant as compared with the least intensive moments of our own waking life.

§ 49. Yet scarcely less significant is the difference of range between man and man. There are, as James says, "the tramp who lives from hour to hour; the bohemian whose engagements are from day to day; the bachelor who builds but for a single life; the father who acts for another generation; and finally the philosopher and saint whose cares are for humanity and eternity." But although "the man whose determinations are swayed by reference to most distant ends has in all ages



been held to possess the highest intelligence," he has not always been credited with the most intensive consciousness; indeed, it is popularly supposed that the very breadth of his view renders him incapable of grasping the world immediately before him. The philosopher in particular is supposed to be in a very bad way, and as compared with the commercial traveller to be only half awake. It is therefore to be expected that I shall declare this to be the expression of a vulgar and superficial point of view. If by "breadth of view" you mean a merely dispersive view, which considers successively all the various furnishings of heaven and earth, with no attempt to grasp them coherently, all at once, then breadth of view may very well be incompatible with present intensity of consciousness. Much of the so-called breadth of view is of this particular type; and really it is just such breadth of view that characterizes the mental attitude of the usual commercial traveller. But the breadth of view called for by our definition is not the dispersive view, not many separated views of the many things, but a grasp of the many in the present moment of thought, all at once. And when you keep this firmly in mind, it will be clear, I think, that the man who views the present from the wider outlook, and for whom the present has a greater and remoter range of suggestiveness, is not merely more intelligent, but more intensively conscious of the object just before him. Nor should we be misled by superficial appearances. The philosopher who lives for eternity and the tramp who lives from hour to hour may be similarly quiescent in outward behavior. The bustling activity of the conventional commercial traveller is in marked contrast to both. Yet the squirrel is perhaps a greater "hustler" than he. The truth is that "life," as a conscious process,



is not a question of the amount of mechanical energy expended, but of the meaning of the ends realized. And likewise the intensity of consciousness with which the life is lived. The man who is most "alive" to the world before him is the man for whom the present and the present act have the most extended significance.

And therefore we must say that, even within the range of normal human life, there is an enormous difference in the degree to which life is consciously lived. The difference between the man of culture, whose reading and study enable him to see the present in the light of other times and places, and the peasant or day-laborer, who lives mainly in the world of today, is not merely a difference of intelligence. The difference of intelligence is in last analysis a difference of intensive clearness in the present conscious life. We who have enjoyed the advantages of education, and whose duties in life involve a constant succession of fresh responsibilities, may often wonder how the monotonous round of unskilled and irresponsible hand-labor can possibly be endurable. The answer is to be found in the fact that the life of those who pursue such occupations is not a very conscious life. The man who follows one shovelful of dirt with another is not thinking very clearly of what he does, — not much more than the horse who works by his side. Working here and there for so much a day, he pays very little attention to the ends which his work is accomplishing. And having no thought of a steady occupation or accumulated resources, he is not much concerned with plans for himself. He is therefore very little alive to the world just before him, as compared with the man for whom each day is but a step in a carefully planned career.

§ 50. When all is said, however, it remains true that,



by the side of the fully conscious life, no human being can be said to be very intensively conscious. No human life ever approaches a grasp of itself as a whole in a single act of thought. No philosopher seeking to comprehend the world as a whole ever comprehends more than a small portion in a single point of view. Hence, properly speaking, he never begins to *comprehend* the world in all its variety and fulness. I say this in no pessimistic vein, — rather, perhaps, in the opposite. It may mean that "the eye hath not seen nor ear heard" the good things that are within reach of us. But in any case it is a fact; a fact which philosophers of all ages have felt to be significant for the interpretation of our human form of knowledge, and which, as I hope to show, has a direct bearing upon the theory of social relations. Even the most thoughtful human mind works within a narrow span of attention. The things of today are illumined by the things of yesterday, and perhaps of last week, but the things of last year have passed more or less into outer darkness, and the light which they would throw upon the present is very largely lost. Our most vivid records of them never enable us to see them as we saw them when present. Our actual human consciousness is therefore a series of relatively exclusive "states." Only relatively exclusive, to be sure; for more or less they overlap and display a concatenate form of continuity. But such continuity is still remote from that fully inclusive unity which would characterize the perfectly conscious life. And so, to use Kant's metaphor, we live at each moment upon a small island of passable clearness surrounded by an ocean of vagueness. Or to change the figure, we are like the man who explores a cavern of indefinite dimensions with a bull's eye lantern. Or once more, and perhaps better, we are in the



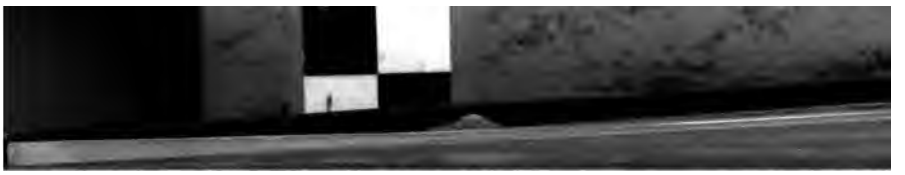
position of the blind man endeavoring to form a conception of a large and complex object by passing his hand successively over its parts. It is believed that as a rule the blind have a very imperfect conception of the meaning of space. So, for us, the world must be a very different thing from what it would be in the broad daylight of a perfect and all-inclusive consciousness.



III The Conscious Individual

Our special investigation into the meaning of consciousness is not yet quite complete, for we have still to inquire into the meaning of that very important conception "the social consciousness." Yet it is time that I should begin to justify our long *détour* through the wilderness of metaphysics by showing the meaning of our definition of consciousness for the conception of the individual person. I have already pointed out that it is your consciousness, and that alone, which makes you the same person, the same yesterday and today, the same in this act and that. I shall endeavor now to show, and at the same time to explain how and why, the measure of your consciousness is the precise measure of your individuality. Here I use the term "individuality" in the idealistic sense. The mechanical individual is after all not an individual, but a unit. But as human beings we are both mechanical bodies and conscious persons. My aim will be, then, to show that so far as we are not conscious we are *nothing but* mechanical bodies, and that our behavior is then strictly a matter of mechanical law, but that so far as we are conscious these mechanical laws are completely superseded in favor of personal ends. I shall not attempt to create the individual out of nothing, but simply to record the changes that occur in any given individual as he becomes more or less conscious.

§ 51. In the last section I have undertaken to mark the several grades of conscious human being by the normal or habitual range of the present span of attention. Suppose, then, we select for consideration one of that very common type whose range of consideration rarely,



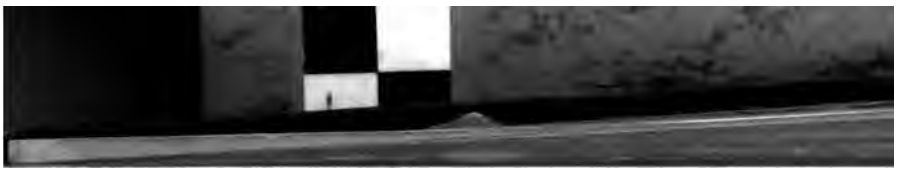
if ever, extends much beyond the "bull's eye" field of his present view. The wholly unambitious day-laborer would best illustrate the type; yet for us the chief significance of the type will lie in the fact that in its essential attributes it covers all of that great mass of persons, representing all social classes, whose life is bounded by *bourgeois* aspirations, and who rarely, if ever, think for themselves; and this means that to a greater or less degree it covers every one of us. Conceive yourself, then, to be one of these typically unthinking persons. My first point will be that so far you are not really a person at all, but only a bundle of habits or instincts, as defined by the mechanical theory, — and this just by virtue of the narrowness of your present point of view. For the act of any moment is now determined, like that of the locomotive,[2] by the conditions immediately present. That is to say, each present habit stands by itself, like each connection of key and type-bar on the type-writer; and each stimulus produces its appropriate reaction — which is determined by a specific reflex-arc in the nervous system — without regard to what you have done in the past or expect to do in the future. If food is placed before you, you eat. If a glowing advertisement strikes your eye, you buy. And when the life-insurance agent grows eloquent you take out a policy. In a word, you do "just what any one would do" who had no personal reason for doing otherwise. That you have no personal reason is due to the narrow range, as assumed by us, of your present point of view. The present object covers nearly the whole field of consciousness. For this reason it is so far the sole determinant of your act. Consequently any act will suffice which satisfies the desire aroused by this object. It

[2] See § 38.



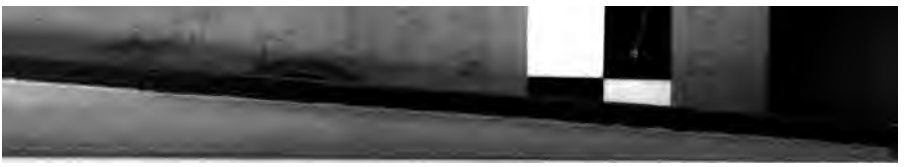
need not be adjusted to satisfy any meaning beyond. For under the conditions it can have no such meaning, nor in the strict sense any meaning whatever, and therefore no individuality. In the absence, then, of any more inclusive consciousness you are not properly a person but only a "bundle," or mechanical aggregate, of relatively independent habits.

§ 52. Now the second point. If no personal *reason* determines your act, what does determine it? Obviously, it would seem, some impersonal "law" of habit. What you do, as I have just noted, is "just what any one would do" under the given conditions. In other words, you are not some one in particular, but only a statistical unit. Here, however, we may pause and record an important discovery, — nothing less, indeed, than the great scientific MAN of cold-blooded, naturalistic science. Who can he be but the man just before us, — *the unconscious man?* For who else can be conceived to express in his behavior the operation of inflexible natural law? In our First Lecture we saw that all such laws presuppose that the men to whom they apply are definitely fixed quantities. We may now see that they are also presupposed to be unconscious quantities. The celebrated "economic man," so constructed that he can buy only in the lowest market and sell only in the highest; the anthropological man, dedicated by Nature to the inevitable perpetuation of his race; the sociological man, bound by hereditary instinct to identify himself with his tribe, — of all these and their like it is tacitly assumed that no personal meaning, no reference of the present to any other personal demand, will get into the situation to disturb the "natural" course of law. And precisely this is assumed of that moral individual of contemporary ethical thought, whose interests are claimed to be, by

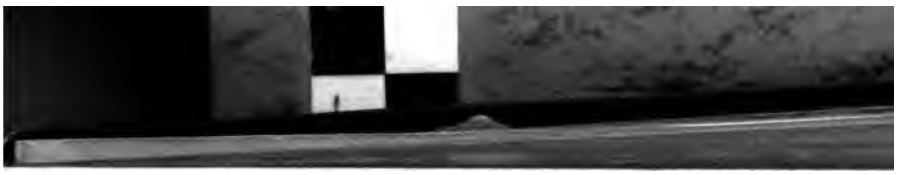


virtue of inherited instinct, "naturally" disinterested and social. So far as he exists, he is not the conscious man, but the man who functions as the unconscious instrument of natural law. But our present purpose is not to criticize these laws of human behavior, but rather to show where they are positively valid. I suppose that no scientific economist, or other student of human conduct, would affirm them to be valid without qualification. A provision is always made for "other things equal." Our purpose is to note that the chief of these "other things" is the absence of any personal meaning, or reason, on the part of the human being in question. Even with this qualification these laws may be said to have an immense range of validity; none the less, their validity is limited to the degree to which men act unconsciously, and fail to know what they are doing. And, so far as this is true, the men to whom they apply are simply mechanical bodies, whose behavior is determined by mechanical law.

§ 53. But now suppose that the present point of view has been made to cover a wider range. In this extension of the range of your consciousness, *you*, the conscious agent, have become a larger and more inclusive being. But our special point is to note that you have become at the same time a more individual being. This broader view means that you are now living and acting, not merely here and now, but also in other times and places in which there are other ends that you seek to attain. And so far as you are really conscious of them, — so far, I mean, as these other ends and situations are not merely remembered, imagined, or reasoned about in an abstract and schematic way, but conceived vividly, distinctly, and concretely, — so far are they, even for the present moment, as real, as vitally important



and as logically compelling, as the ends of the present moment itself. What will be the result of this comprehensively present view? The usual empirical psychology will tell you that a vaguely composite, or general end is substituted for the present particular end, — a common good for this particular good. But this is only another case of pretending to talk about ideas when in reality you are speaking of physical things. A composite photograph is a blurred image whose chiefly discernible features are the visual features common to all of its objects. A composite pudding is a vague mixture of tastes in the proportion of its several components. But such mixture is true of ideas only so far as they are not really ideas. For the essence of an idea is to be, not mixed, but clear. And a clear idea, as we have seen, is such as to present each of its details with perfect individual distinctness, yet all at once, articulated into a perfect and inclusive system. And so I say that when, by virtue of a wider range of consciousness, you find yourself committed to a greater range and variety of ends, this larger being which you have now become is no mere generalization of these particular ends, but a unity of a highly specialized grade of individual meaning, for which, or rather for whom, none of these particular ends may be compromised or blurred without a flaw in the realization of the personal self, and for whom the problem of life is now to secure perfect fulfilment of each of these ends in the present single stroke of choice. Any act that will now express your meaning must therefore be a finely modelled act. Not "what any one would do" under the given circumstances, but only what will satisfy that complex unity of aims which represents *you*. Almost any heavy instrument will serve to hit a nail, but only a well designed hammer will



drive a nail squarely, with economy of force and certainty of aim. So, while a very crude response to a stimulus may satisfy the present want, the satisfaction of a more inclusive conscious meaning will demand a choice of movements nicely selected and individuated.

§ 54. And the more so to the extent that the meaning in question is comprehensive and inclusive. Each broader reference of the present will demand a more distinctly personal and individual form of expression. We have seen how much is involved in the conception of a fully conscious act, how far removed is such an act from any actual human choice. Yet we have only to place the conception before us to see that our parallelism of consciousness and individuality would hold true to the end. If you could make the present choice from the standpoint of a clear vision of the whole of your personal life, you would express yourself in an act so individuated that from all eternity it could be the act of none other but yourself; and in that perfect individuation it would have ceased in any measure whatever to be the expression of natural law.

§ 55. So much for a general statement of our thesis. To appreciate its force, however, we must consider some of its various implications. These will involve a repetition in substance of the thesis itself. Yet their significance is such, I think, as to make the repetition worth our while.

First, I wish to note that the appearance of your conscious individuality upon the scene of action means that a new and original force is inserted into the economy of the social and the physical world. So much, indeed, is already implied in the contrast of personal meaning and natural law. What I wish to note now is that this conclusion follows inevitably from any admission of the



efficiency, or even reality, of consciousness. For the reality includes the efficiency; when you have admitted a fact into your world you cannot then affirm that in the economy of your world this fact makes no difference. Now consciousness is just such a fact. It matters not that certain organic conditions are necessary to give the conscious life a basis. Assume, if you like, a certain arrangement of reflexes in the organism in certain relations to the details of the physical environment, — in other words, a certain outfit of instincts. It will be none the less true that the *conscious* operation of these instincts is a new and unique fact. And if a fact at all, then a fact of revolutionary significance. For assume once more that to know what you are doing makes a difference. To know what you are now doing means that you also know what you were doing yesterday and expect to do tomorrow. If, then, your knowing makes any difference whatever, the difference must be this: that you act now, not merely in response to the present stimulus, but from the point of view of a unity of personal interests. And this point of view, I say, is a new factor in the economy of the social and physical world, which so far sets aside the operation of natural law. So far as you act consciously your act is never "natural" but always individual and peculiar. Not, indeed, that it expresses no law. Conscious action is the utter antithesis of chance-action. If anything, it is more than ever governed by law,—not, however, by any external economic or mechanical law, but by the law involved in the consistent expression of your personal meaning.

§ 56. Secondly, let us note that this new force injected into the social and physical world is in the form of a personal activity. By this I mean that it is a force that radiates from you as its heart and center. In our



derivation of individuality from consciousness I have assumed as a basis a series of acts of a given physical organism which were isolated in time and place, and then have asked what would happen if these acts became conscious. But it must not be assumed from this that a number of various ends have been simply collected into a special but impersonal group. Any such assumption would mean that we are still under the influence of the mechanical conception of a series of mental states. As a series of temporally separated states you can, indeed, hardly be conceived to act upon the world from a centralized personal agency. Your successive acts must then be conceived to be the acts of so many temporally atomic selves. But the very notion of yourself as a conscious agent means, as we have seen, that you are in a literal sense living and acting both in the present and in the past; that the self of yesterday, today, and tomorrow is not a succession but an ever-immediate logical unity; and therefore that any present and past act of yours, however separated in time, will if mutually cognizant as expressions of the same personal meaning, proceed from an eternally identical personal agency.

§ 57. But thirdly, — in the degree to which you become a conscious individual you become also a free agent. By this I mean simply that as a conscious being you are able to do as you please. But as a conscious being what you please is never a matter of whim or chance. Rather should it be described as that which seems best to you when all things are considered; and to the extent that you are conscious, that only can seem best which expresses a personally consistent course of action. If, then, your consciousness makes any difference it makes this difference, that it makes you so



far independent of the external laws of nature. So much will be obvious from what has been said before. My purpose in repeating the statement is not so much to emphasize the fact as to call attention to the intimate necessity and immediacy of the connection between consciousness and personal freedom. For, in order that you may be free, nothing further is required than just this presence in your thinking now and here of other times and places. So far as the present object stands alone, so far are you compelled to deal with it in the manner determined by your inherited instincts. You are then the statistical, average man whose only function is to illustrate natural law. So far, however, as the present object finds you thinking of other objects in other times and places, it encounters in you an agent who is capable of choosing what response he will make. And thus it follows from the very conception of consciousness that "the truth shall set you free."

§ 58. Fourth and last, however, among these present considerations, and for our purpose the most important of all, is the fact that in becoming a conscious individual you become an end in and for yourself and a law unto yourself. This, indeed, is the point of central importance for our theory of individualism. I have already referred to that "ethical paradox" which teaches that an act, to have moral value, must be the expression of personal choice, yet at the same time of a disinterested choice. If our analysis of consciousness means anything it means that a disinterested choice is absolutely out of the question. For consciousness by its very nature involves a reference, whether of fact or of value, to an individual and personal point of view. A purely impersonal object can never be the object of any actual thinking. There can be no idea of an object which does not bear the



imprint of the point of view from which it is conceived, — just as there can be no sketch or photograph of Westminster Abbey which does not present the Abbey from a particular point in space. Every conscious grasp of the world involves the location of yourself as holding a certain position in and toward the world and the orientation of the world from that position.

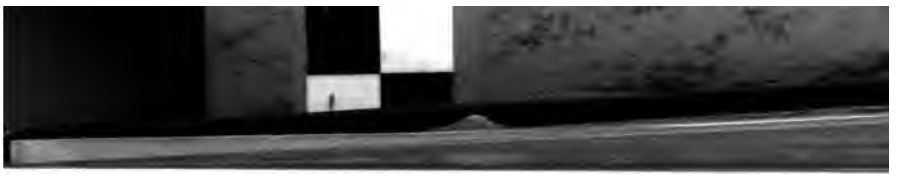
Likewise every valuation of the world. For valuation is the inevitable correlate of any knowing. It expresses your attitude toward the object that you know; and nothing can be known by you toward which you have no attitude to express. Value appears in the world when a being which is acting in a certain way and moving in a certain direction becomes aware of the nature and direction of his movements and thereby capable of asking whether this is the direction in which he wishes to move. Value arises, then, with the discovery and location of yourself as a moving power in the world. By virtue of this discovery you become capable of determining the direction of this force and the ends that it shall accomplish. This consciousness of your own power is all that creates for you an end or makes any object an object of value. It is therefore inconceivable that this value should be other than the value which the object has for you. Any other value must hang simply in the air. It is true that any understanding of your own ends will show that your ends are interwoven with those of other conscious beings. And this becomes clearer with the further development of consciousness. But at the same time it will become more than ever clear that the end that is rational and right for you must, whatever else it be, be individually your own. The very meaning of moral responsibility is that no valuation of another or for another can be an



end for you. As a self-conscious being the ends of your action must be those which have a meaning for yourself; and nothing can have a meaning for you in which your individual and personal meaning is not fully satisfied. And therefore I say that by virtue of your consciousness you become an end in and for yourself.

§ 59. And as an end in yourself, *not* a means for the ends of others. It makes no difference whether these others be your human others, or Nature, or God. We read in the Book of Genesis that, after our first ancestors had eaten of the tree of knowledge, the Lord God said, "Behold, this man has become *as one of us*, to know good and evil." In this naïve statement we have, as I think, a primitive apprehension of just those social relations which Kant made explicit a century ago. Before this first "enlightenment" the Lord God was alone to be considered, and the man could be regarded as a mere instrument for his satisfaction. But this was now forever out of the question. He might be managed by hope of Heaven or fear of Hell; he might even be destroyed; but as long as he retained the power to know he constituted by that very fact an end in himself, an "other" even for the Lord God, and he could be moved, or morally obliged, only by an appeal to his personal interests.

§ 60. So, again, with regard to Nature. Almost the most compelling of the natural forces determining human conduct is the instinct of sex. Yet I can conceive of no more conspicuous illustration of the power of the conscious agent to set natural law aside. A century or so ago Malthus formulated the law of the pressure of population upon subsistence, a law which at once found its place as an important term in the classical system of economics. From this point of view the sex-



instinct was regarded mainly as a blind passion, intense beyond all rational justification, and practically inevitable both in its operation and its results; so that it placed, at least upon the less favored of men, the terrible alternative of a practically impossible self-restraint or elimination by starvation. With the introduction of evolutionary conceptions into anthropology the estimation of the law was changed, without, however, introducing any change into its mode of operation. It was now regarded as a beneficent arrangement whereby Nature compels the individual, whether or no, to furnish the material required by natural selection for the perpetuation of his race. As for the waste involved, well, evolution has shown that this is Nature's way; and Nature, of course, knows best. *Mais nous avons changé tout cela*, — as attested by the "barbaric yawp" over "race-suicide" and its more or less conventional echoes. To this change no one has contributed more than Malthus and the anthropologists, and all in a very beautiful way. For if you once make it clear to a thinking man that he is simply obeying a law of nature, in that moment Nature's law, however compelling elsewhere, has ceased to have an application for him. You may tell him, if you like, that Nature's is a beneficent law and ought to be observed. He, however, as a responsible agent, will decide that for himself.

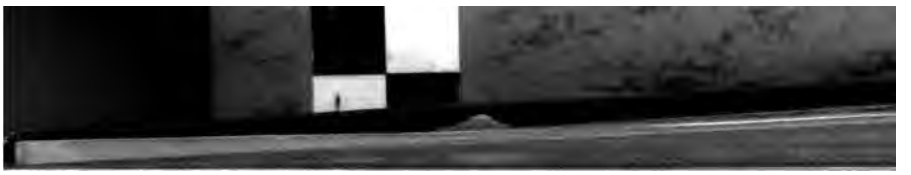
Let it be granted that the intensity of the sex-instinct is Nature's way of preserving the race. Undoubtedly Nature does preserve the race by just this means. A large part of the race marry and bring children into the world one after the other, with no clear conception at any time of what they are doing, — all simply in obedience to Nature's law. Yet suppose that two people about to marry ask themselves definitely why. The



slightest self-consciousness will show them that they have only the remotest interest in the preservation of the *race*. Nothing, indeed, could be more grotesque than a proposal of marriage expressed in anthropological terms. It may be that they look forward with pleasure to a family of children. Yet I venture to say that even this is a minor consideration beside the one all-important purpose of personal union. Tell them, then, that this union is forbidden by Nature except at the price of children; they will undertake to determine this, if possible, precisely as they themselves see fit.

In this they will simply be true to themselves as self-conscious and responsible agents. To one who knows what he is doing and is capable of choosing what he will do, it is irrelevant to proclaim Nature's law. For him the law of Nature conveys no obligation, and so far as he has mastered the secrets of Nature he cannot be compelled to obey. Not that he regards the ends of Nature as necessarily evil. Rather, indeed, will the man about to marry rejoice in the possibility of having a family of children, nor can he fail to be in some degree interested in the ultimate preservation of his race. But the important point is that through the fact of his self-consciousness, through that alone, the center of gravity has been shifted. No longer is Nature the end and he the means. If anything Nature is now the means. In any case the authority of Nature's ends, and of the ways and means and limitations through which they are to be brought about, must now depend upon their importance for himself.

§ 61. With this set of considerations we might perhaps conclude our present topic and pass to the next. Yet if we are to comprehend the conscious individual in his full significance there is at least one more con-



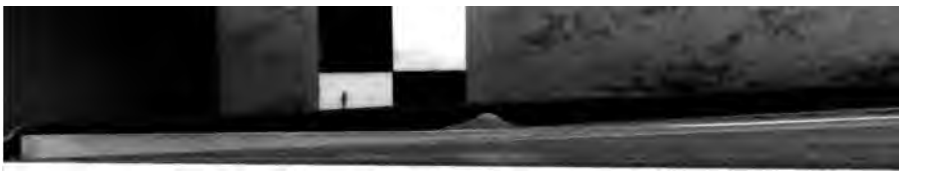
sideration which we should not fail to note. It is, I hope, already clear that the conscious individual is not to be defined by that utilitarian method of abstract calculation, in which the values of his several aims are supposed to be "funded" into a formless mass of "utility" or "pleasure," for the purpose of deriving therefrom the greatest quantity of pleasure. The unity of the conscious individual is not the unity of the melting-pot. Neither, however, is it the unity of the department store or the stock-corporation. Modern theories of the nervous system are wont to represent the individual as a hierarchy of higher and lower centers, a sort of graded system of superintendents and subordinates with the cerebral hemispheres, playing the part of captain of industry, at their head. This conception is reinforced by the "functional" theory of consciousness, according to which consciousness, like the captain of industry, is supposed to appear upon the scene only when the situation is one which the organized habits of the lower controlling centers are unable to meet. According to this view consciousness illumines but a small portion of the individual life, only so much, indeed, as finds its way into the captain's office. By the functional psychologists this arrangement is regarded, of course, as a beautiful provision of Nature, whereby the individual is enabled to carry on an extended activity — to do a large business, so to speak — with a small expenditure of consciousness. One of the illustrations commonly employed represents its advantages for the artist, — *e.g.*, the musician, who practices his technique until it becomes so automatic and unconscious that he is able to give his entire attention to the work of interpretation.

I am not ready to say that this view is entirely without practical justification. All that I wish to point out



is that, whatever its justification, and whatever the value of these automatisms for a being with a limited span of attention, it cannot presume to offer the ideal of a conscious individual from the standpoint of the conscious agent himself. And, indeed, it does not pretend to do so. The whole of this functional psychology rests upon the assumption that the organic life — not the conscious life, but just the preservation of the organic individual in mechanical working-order — this is the main thing, for the attainment of which consciousness is merely an instrument. So I shall merely repeat that from the standpoint of the conscious agent the whole value of life consists in its being conscious; and this is the only standpoint from which life, or anything else, can have any value whatever. From any standpoint of value, an unconscious organism, however lively in its movements, is as worthless as a corpse. And therefore I say that for the conscious individual the ideal of life is not to relegate any part of his living to the care of nervous automatisms, but to make every feature of life the object of immediate conscious control and the source of immediate conscious satisfaction. Only that life is truly conscious which is pervaded and illumined throughout by the direct presence of the whole conscious self. Any departmental life is so far unconscious, and so far not a personal unity.

§ 62. Now, although this ideal is very remote from the economy of our daily life, there are times when we measurably approach it, and there are activities in which it is clearly our deliberate ideal. I refer to the mental attitude involved in the creation or appreciation of a work of art. Surely it is not automatism that characterizes a true work of art. For that matter any trace of automatism is so far a blemish. Art aims above all



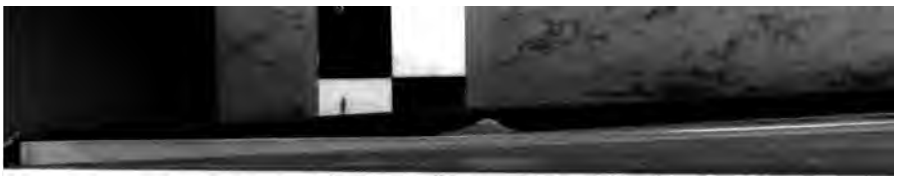
things to be free. When, therefore, the musician practices his technique, it is not to develop a set of mechanical habits but to obtain complete conscious control. And when at last he succeeds in expressing himself with perfect execution, he is no longer playing upon an unconscious, foreign instrument, but his piano, or violin, has become, like his fingers, an integral part of himself, and forms, with his body, a single organism which is now in every detail immediately responsive and alive with immediate conscious meaning. In a word, his conscious personality has expanded so as to cover now, all at once, every aspect of his act. In this victorious expansion of the conscious self he breaks the bonds imposed by the materials of his art and becomes freely creative.

In these moments of successful expansion the agent is more than ever a unique individual. Then, as at no other time, every feature of his act bears his individual stamp and is so shaped that it could belong to no other person, — and all by virtue of his more expanded consciousness. We need not be artists or art-critics to appreciate the truth of this relation. Or rather we should say that any one can appreciate the problem of art who has once tried to perform a difficult task just as it ought to be done. Every educated man is familiar with the problem involved, for example, in literary composition. There is perhaps no more difficult art than to say, even of the common affairs of life, precisely what you mean. Reference to the dictionary might lead one to believe that every word has a precise and fixed meaning; but the briefest glance at literature, or for that matter a snatch of animated conversation, will show that, so far as a man has a meaning of his own to express, each item of his language expresses his meaning, and his alone.



Yet I suppose that every one who attempts to put his thoughts into writing has his days when words are mere words and nothing more. We speak at such times of the difficulty of concentration. But it is equally a difficulty of expansion. You cannot get your thoughts together because you cannot cover your field of thought. Like the traveller in a fog, your vision is limited to the region just about you, and you find it difficult to make out whence your argument has come and whither you intend it to go. And when you afterwards review what you have written you find there a string of formal literary phrases expressing not so much what you meant as what was the correct thing to say. Contrast this with the rarer occasions when you are truly and certainly yourself. Then, in a mental atmosphere of serene clearness, the whole field of your argument lies extended before you in perfect distinctness of outline. And then, just because of your expanded field of vision, you know at each moment just where you are, just what you mean; and every phrase that you utter, instead of being merely the proper thing to say, is now remoulded, re-born, so to speak, out of the depths of your private self, and, like your hand or your face, so individuated that it could belong to no one else. In these rare moments of concentration we have an intimation of what it would mean to be, in one's life as a whole, a completely integrated and completely self-conscious individual person. A life made thus finally luminous would be the last and most perfect embodiment of art.

Such, then, is the meaning of the individual. In reaching this point I trust that I may now have justified our excursion into the metaphysical wilderness after the conception of consciousness and the gradations of consciousness. For as we may now see, it is your being



conscious that makes you an individual person, and your being conscious means that, in contrast to mechanical objects, you at this present moment live and act not only in the present but in the past and future as well. Such is the concrete significance of the conception of the one and the many. But the meaning of this is by no means confined to the purpose of marking you off as an individual person. If your individuality is a fact, it is a practical fact of revolutionary significance. For it means that, so far, you are no longer an item in the economy of nature, but an independent and original force; and that, therefore, you are no longer a means for Nature's ends, but a source of value and an end in yourself. "So far," you may repeat. Why, then, is the range of our self-knowledge so narrowly limited? And what is it that stands in the way of its complete expansion? To this final of all questions I shall attempt no answer. I shall say only that to me the analysis of these limitations means that "the fault lies not in our stars, but in ourselves." The fact that we are now conscious, in however narrow a range, — for science that fact alone is a miracle. And I can see no reason why there should not be, or how there could fail to be, in the fact of our present freedom, and in that alone, the promise and potency of unlimited further power. At any rate I hold that the logic of our consciousness compels us to assume that this is true.



IV The Conception of Social Consciousness

§ 63. From the conscious individual we pass to the relation of such individuals in a social order. First, however, we must institute a special inquiry into the meaning of these relations for conscious beings; in other words, we must ask what is to be understood by "social consciousness," and what constitutes a conscious society. The phrase "social consciousness" is one of rather wide currency and, I should say, of corresponding vagueness. Professor Ross gives it the common interpretation when he says that social psychology deals with "uniformities in feeling, belief, or volition." [3] This, you will note, is an expression of the same mechanical mode of thought as that which conceives the conscious individual to be a composite mixture, or average, of his several particular desires. Along the same line it seems to be commonly assumed that a group of conscious individuals constitutes *ipso facto* a conscious society, *i.e.*, merely because, being conscious, they are spatially grouped and interact. This, however, amounts to the same as saying that violet is double red because the corresponding rate of vibration is (approximately) double, or that, because of its location on the spectrum, yellow, as yellow, is "between" red and green. Any relation of "between-

[3] *Social Psychology*, p. 1. The definition is qualified to exclude all but the uniformities due to social causes, *i.e.*, to the interaction of human beings; but from the first part of the definition, and elsewhere in the book, it would seem that the social causes fail to produce correspondingly *social* effects.

It seems in order here to quote Professor Mead's opinion that, "if we except Professor Cooley, in his *Human Nature and the Social Order*, and his *Social Organization*, the sociologists have no adequate social psychology with which to interpret their own science."



ness" between colors as such must be a color-relation, to be determined, not from the location of hues on the spectrum, but from the nature of color-quality itself. Likewise I say that any social relation between conscious beings as such must be a *conscious relation*, to be derived from the nature of their consciousness, and not from the fact that they coexist or interact in a world of space and time. This involves, as we shall see, a consciousness *of* relation; not mere interaction, but mutually self-conscious interaction, or interaction *plus* inter-communication.

§ 64. Let us recall our definition of consciousness. The essential thing about consciousness is, as we have seen, to be both many and one, both here and there, both now and then,—by contrast to which mechanical facts may be here or there, now or then, but never both. We have seen what this means for the individual. The individual is conscious so far as every element of his being is one with, and at the same time distinct from, every other,—so far as every act is performed and every interest is expressed from a point of view which at the same time expresses every other, yet each with perfect distinctness and fulness. Now the same relations are involved in the conception of a conscious society. And just as we have already decided that the term "individual" belongs properly to the conscious individual, so may we now in a similar fashion restrict the term "society." No mere aggregate of units can constitute a society. Nor does it follow that an aggregate of human beings will be to any special degree mutually conscious. Indeed, under modern conditions of communication such an inference would be conspicuously false. A citizen of New York may be infinitely better acquainted with a citizen of



London of kindred tastes and habits than with any of his fellow-citizens of New York. His next-door neighbor in New York he may not know by name. He and his neighbor may then, indeed, condition each other's existence, but in the absence of mutual knowledge there is no distinctively social relation.

A conscious society — or a society — is constituted, then, by the fact that each of a number of individuals holds a point of view which includes and is at the same time perfectly distinct from the point of view of each other. In other words, society is constituted by mutual understanding. No mere interaction will constitute a social relation. Nor yet an interaction of otherwise self-conscious agents. Not merely must each agent know himself, he must know the others. Not merely must his behavior produce an effect upon them, he must produce this effect consciously. Nor is it sufficient that *he* consciously acts upon them; he must have their conscious response; and they, again, must know from him that their response is received. Unless there be on both sides a perfect consciousness of self and of other, and of the relations of self and other — in a word, a perfect mutual understanding — there will be, so far, no completely social relation. A social relation is a self-conscious relation.

§ 65. All this follows, as you will see, directly from the conception of the conscious individual. A relation of ideas is itself an idea, — never a mere relation, but an idea of relation. This is the only relation that ideas can be conceived to have. It is admittedly absurd to say that one idea lies north or south of another; it should be equally absurd to say that one is later than another. For ideas as such are related, not temporally, but logically, as expression of one inclusive conscious meaning.



Apart from this idea of relation the different chapters of a book, for example, are related only as so many facts of paper and ink. So of any group of men. The fact of spatial congregation expresses truly enough the relation of their physical bodies, but except as they are aware of themselves as a group they have, as ideas, or minds, or persons, no relation whatever. On the other hand, it is by virtue of this idea of relation that each of the individuals knows himself as himself and no one else. For, as already noted, an idea can know itself, can have a meaning of its own, only by contrast with other ideas.

Yet by no means may it be concluded from this that the individual is "the product of the social order." For, apart from the irrelevance of the term "product," it should be remembered that the social order — that social situation by contrast to which the individual knows himself — is never prior to the individual but contemporaneous. And for him it is created and characterized by the very process of definition in which he defines and asserts himself. Nor, once more, is the contrast of self and others a question of only your human others. For the finer aspects of your individuality these, indeed, are the most important, yet your knowledge of yourself includes none the less a contrast of self and nature. You may claim, perhaps, that Nature, too, is a partner in a "social" situation; and your metaphor would be justified so far as it stands for the fact that your relation to your human fellows is in last analysis not absolutely unique. Only, it would then mean something very different to say that the individual is a term in a social contrast; for a "social" contrast would simply be any contrast whatever. I shall say something more of this in the next lecture.[4] For the present it

[4] § 98.



will be sufficient to note that the situation in which the individual defines and distinguishes himself is not primarily a social situation, in the current acceptance of that term, but a conscious situation.

§ 66. Yet it may be that the priority of the social unity, defeated at this point, will attack us at another. "You have undertaken to prove," I will suppose our objector to say, "that the distinctively conscious relations of unity with multiplicity which make Peter of today, yesterday, and tomorrow an individual person, are the relations which, as between Peter and Paul, constitute a conscious society. Well, then, if such be the case society is also an individual. Or, rather, shall we not say that after all society is the real unit of which the individual person is merely an abstract function?" Now, that a social group, such as a family, a university, or a nation, may in its own measure be regarded as an individual person I shall be very willing to admit. Indeed, the possibility of such a person is implied in our definition. And if time permitted it would be exceedingly interesting to investigate the manner and degree of the personality of some of these group-individuals. They would be found, I think, to possess in general far less of the unity with multiplicity than the average, normal man. But assume it to be otherwise: the individuality of the group will not in the slightest degree reflect upon the individuality of the individual member, nor render him any less distinctly an end in himself. And of one who should think otherwise I should say that he had before him, not a conscious society, in the sense just defined, but a mechanical group. Mechanically speaking, it is quite correct to say that if the group is the unit, the individual member is only a fractional part, — and in that sense an abstrac-



tion. And if importance be a question of number and size, then of course the single member, or the smaller group, will be so far less important than the larger. If, moreover, the different members of the group are bound together by mechanical ties, like the atoms composing a billiard-ball, or the members of an animal body, or for that matter, a pair of twin stars — and on no other assumption could they constitute a strictly mechanical group — then, if the group acts as a unit, the action of the individual member will be subordinate and dependent, and his ends will be sacrificed to the group-ends. In a word, then, from a mechanical standpoint, it is inconceivable that the group and any of its members should both be concrete and free individuals. And as I have noted before, this mechanical standpoint is responsible for a large part of our thinking about social relations. It alone can explain why, even for idealistic thinking, there should be a tendency for everybody "to count for one and nobody for more than one";[5] or why the end of the single individual should be so universally regarded as minor or subordinate to that of the group. In both of these statements the social situation is represented by a numerical individual and a numerical group. Very different are the relations constituting a conscious society. Grant that in such a society you have a social personality. So far as the unity in question is a self-conscious unity, this can mean only, according to our definition, that each member has come to an understanding with each and every other on the basis of a mutual recognition of personal ends. This will mean that by contrast with each and every other he has defined himself. His individuality must then be quite as rich

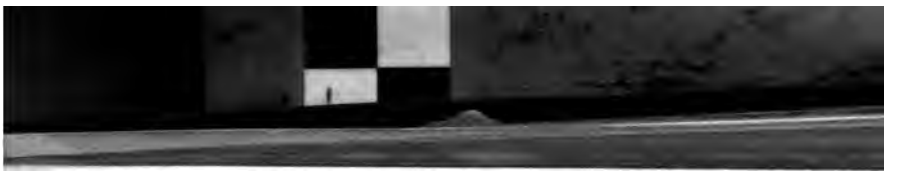
[5] *I.e.*, why individual freedom should be identified with *equality* of rights.



in content as that of the group itself. His ends must be equally significant. And as we shall see presently, he will be enabled, through just this conscious social relation, to follow his own ends in individual freedom while fulfilling his obligation to the group.

§ 67. Such being the social consciousness, we may now see what is meant by "an increasing social consciousness." In the individual, we have seen, an increase of consciousness means that the point of view of each moment has come to cover a wider range of his individual life. More and more he has ceased to live solely in the present and each present now includes a wider range of his life in other times and places. In like manner society may be said to grow in consciousness so far as each individual forms personal relations, and comes to terms of understanding, with a wider range of his fellows. And thus, once more, we see that every increase of social consciousness involves an increasing self-consciousness in the individuals concerned. For each new acquaintance that you make, and each step toward a more intimate acquaintance, means for you a fresh act of comparison, and a new distinction, in the creation of which you give a new character to yourself and thus arrive at an intenser and clearer self-consciousness. At the same time the consciousness of mutual relations is intensified and made clearer throughout your social group.

§ 68. If consciousness be the basis of value this enlargement of social relations must be regarded as the central fact in the progress of culture and civilization. In this fact we must look for the meaning of those agencies which by common consent have so rapidly intensified and broadened the civilization of the modern world, — the railroad, the steamship, the telegraph, the printing-press, and the newspaper. The effect of all



these is to bring men who are separated by distance, or by accidents of social position, into relations of mutual acquaintance, and thus to secure for each a larger range of personal life. So, in particular, of commerce and education. The basis of commerce is an intercommunication of wants. Education is a matter mainly of contact with other minds. This, indeed, is the whole meaning of the higher, or liberal, education, — that through the medium of libraries and schools we are brought into intimate intercourse with the great minds of other ages and peoples in their best and most serious moments. The whole process of culture and civilization is thus a process of increasing self-consciousness in the individual and in the race. In this development the conscious aspect is the central fact that gives meaning and justification to the whole. Commerce, for example, is not a mere means for increasing, through exchange, the supply of serviceable goods, — any more than the activities of individual reason are mere means for keeping a foreign body alive. The value of the bodily life lies in its being consciously lived; and any activity become self-conscious becomes thereby an end in itself. So of commerce. As an unconscious process, a sort of social habit, it has indeed a value, like any other mechanical process, in the ends that it happens to effect. But when the commercial relation becomes a self-conscious relation — not merely an interchange of goods, but a conscious interchange, based upon a mutual appreciation of wants — a new meaning is introduced; and the increase of serviceable goods, though no less an end than before, is now but one feature in the enlargement of the personal life through broader social relations.

§ 69. But for my purpose the special point of all this is not so much the social consciousness as the social



unconsciousness. For indeed it must be clear that if consciousness of mutual relations marks the end of culture and civilization that end must be for us still indefinitely remote. We have seen how far is any individual life from a complete interrelation of its several aims. Further, if anything, must be the race as a whole from that universality of personal relationship and mutual understanding which would make it a completely self-conscious human race. Yet just as we tend to think of the human being as a once-for-all conscious being, so do we think of the human race as, by virtue of this fact, a conscious race. But a conscious race implies a consciousness of social relations; and it is evident that even intelligent men who stand in important physical or economic relations to each other may be conscious of this relationship in very various degrees. But if the consciousness of social relations is a significant social fact, the unconsciousness of these relations must be a fact equally significant and illuminating.

Since every human being is to some degree conscious, I am unable to present a case of complete unconsciousness of social relations. The most benighted savage must be supposed to have some notion of his relation to his tribe, and no doubt he has a vague conception of "the race as a whole." Yet for our purpose it is rather important to have a flesh and blood picture of what complete social unconsciousness would mean. The billiard-balls on the table would furnish a just illustration. But more illuminating would be that social situation which is sometimes applied to human beings as a term of reproach, the situation of the animal herd. Picture to yourselves a herd of cattle grazing in the pasture. No doubt there is a certain unity there. Some not quite unconscious social instinct keeps them



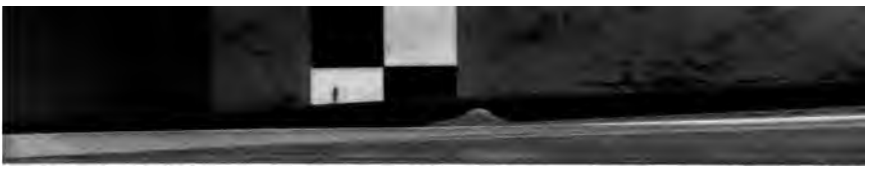
more or less together; and probably the mental condition of each is different from what it would be if he were grazing alone. But such unity is very remote from the unity of conscious beings who are actively aware of each other. Through the long day you will observe few signs of mutual recognition. In fact your cattle behave much like a group of human individuals who by some chance had overlooked the presence of each other in the same room.

§ 70. Now, among the smaller human groups such mutual oblivescence is (except by special convention) rarely found. Yet in the larger groups we shall find precisely the same conditions that we find among the cattle. In the small town, of course, everybody knows his neighbor and his neighbor's business. But in the large city this is the exception rather than the rule. Your neighbor's business may, for all you know, be exerting a very decided effect upon your own, yet you pass on the street with as little recognition as that of the cattle in the pasture. Still less does any personal relationship pervade the nation as a whole. "The will of the people" is no doubt the highest law; but the will of the people as expressed at the polls is a psychological and social fact of very different order from, say, the will of a family which has been reached after personal conference and discussion. For, in spite of all modern improvements in the gathering and dissemination of news, the nation as a whole remains still to a very large degree an aggregate of more or less isolated and, as regards mutual understanding, foreign groups. Indeed, it is becoming every day clearer that the greatest problem for a democracy on a large scale is the problem of "getting together" for the purpose of self-conscious and intelligent action. In the meantime between our political life



and that of the cattle there is often a striking resemblance. A movement is started in a certain direction and the crowd follows, not by reason of any individual approval, but as the result chiefly of the bovine habit of all unthinking animals of doing what they see others do. The average citizen at the polls either votes blindly, according to family tradition and habit, or, if he essays a self-conscious choice, he finds himself limited to a list of candidates none of whom meets his approval, and this list he could scarcely hope to alter except at a large sacrifice of the time and attention required for his own affairs. You have all known of cases where, because each member of a committee, or what not, thought he was voting with the majority, the combined vote was unsatisfactory to all concerned. Very much of this sort of thing may be found in our national politics, and all because of unconsciousness of our social life.

Taking a broad view of the field of humanity we find men separated into various more or less overlapping groups, — spatial groups determined by geographical boundaries, class and family groups, and groups determined by special professional or personal interests. For the average individual of any group a given individual of another group makes commonly, as an individual, no difference in his conscious world. In Balzac's "Père Goriot" young Rastignac, tempted to become a silent partner to the arrangement of a profitable duel, asks a friend whether he would feel any serious responsibility if a formally innocent act of his should cause the death of an unknown mandarin in China. The question is a searching one. It requires an effort of imagination to feel responsible for a brother whom you do not know. Even those who believe in heathen damnation are rarely prostrated by their belief. As I sit before a grate of

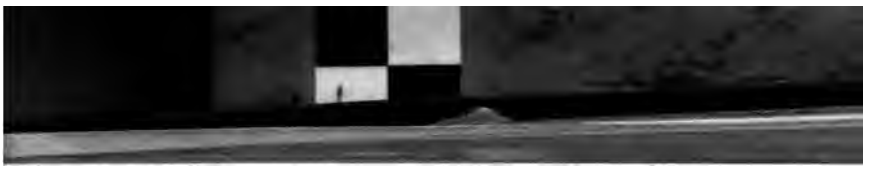


blazing coal on a cold Winter night I know, of course, that the coal has been mined by some individual miner, by hard and disagreeable work, at some risk of his life; but this knowledge hardly disturbs my equanimity. Yet if that miner were personally known to me, and especially if the work of mining my coal were performed, so to speak, before my eyes, I could hardly avoid making his problem my own. This only shows how imperfectly conscious is our mutual relation. For relation there is. I depend upon his work, he depends upon my money. In spite of all the complexities involved in the process of exchange it remains a fact that my consumption, or non-consumption, of coal makes a difference in the coal market, a difference which finally makes itself felt in the life of some one or more of the individual miners. That this difference cannot be traced does not mean that it is "absorbed" in a social process. It means only that the social process is so far an unconscious process.

§ 71. Thus from the more distant view. When, however, we take a nearer and more intimate view of the several individual lives we find the social darkness relieved here and there by smaller or larger circles of mutual understanding, each of which casts a certain glow upon the situation as a whole. No individual is utterly isolated. Each is the center of a circle of more or less intimate relations within which the consciousness of relationship is developed to a comparatively high degree. Beyond this intimate circle there is the larger circle of ordinary daily intercourse. But in every such group there are men of broader culture and education whose conscious life goes beyond the immediately visible circle into a larger social world, — the natural scientist who views the world just before him as a term



in a system of nature; the economist who views the special conditions of his own life as the expression of the complex activities of the race; the student of literature who cultivates sympathetic intercourse with men of other tongues and times; and finally the philosopher who seeks explicitly to know himself in his relations to every other fact in the universe. The effect of all these activities is to establish relations of personal intercourse with men of distant groups and widely different views of life. The higher culture is thus an extension of the intimately personal relation into a wider field, or in other words, an extension of the field of conscious social relations. On the other hand each such extension involves an intensification of the individual self-consciousness, which is reflected in a further refinement of relations within the more familiar circle; so that it may be said that the finer degrees of personal intimacy are reserved for those of developed minds. Yet the personal understanding remains incomplete among the most enlightened of men. To the English reader, however appreciative, the point of view of French literature is never quite comprehensible. Just so in the case of your wife, your son, your closest friend. In the most intimate of personal relations each still lives in a world which is in some degree isolated and outside of the world of his fellow.



V The Conscious Society

§ 72. We have now to develop the significance of our conception of social consciousness for the adjustment of social relations. And in this we shall see, I trust, the importance of having this relation of conscious beings correctly and clearly defined. For if the presence of consciousness in society stands for nothing more than a certain uniformity of belief and feeling, it is not to be seen how consciousness can make any difference in the adjustment of social relations. For that matter it might seem only to show that social adjustment is impossible; for where all want the same thing few will be satisfied, especially if no man of them knows what the other man wants. If, however, the presence of consciousness in society means that each knows the other as well as himself, and the other as other and distinct from himself, we can see at once how consciousness may be an effective adjusting force. For now we have, in the relation of man to man, the same relation that we found between the different demands of the individual self. There we saw that by the mere fact of being conscious — of including in his present act a consideration of the past and future — the individual is enabled so to adjust his several demands as to give satisfaction to all; by this fact he is removed from the jurisdiction of laws of nature and enabled to assert himself as an independent power with purposes of his own. The same results follow from a consciousness of each other. If consciousness makes a difference anywhere it must also make a difference here. And this can mean only that, merely through knowing one another, men are enabled so far — so far as their mutual knowledge is complete — to



effect such a mutual adjustment of activities that each may enjoy perfect satisfaction and freedom. Through this mutual knowledge the group, like the individual, is enabled to assert itself as an independent force. The social life become conscious is no longer an illustration of impersonal laws, but the expression of a system of personal ends determined in mutual freedom and agreement. On the other hand the social life not become conscious is a matter of rigid mechanical law, by which the individual members are committed to mutual hostility and repression.

§ 73. So comprehensive a thesis can hardly be proved in the proper sense of the term, and much of what would constitute proof has been already indicated in the analysis of the conceptions. I shall therefore confine myself to certain of the more salient points. And in the first place I will ask you to consider once more the situation in an unconscious society. This was illustrated by us in the figure of the herd; but, as I remarked, a juster illustration could have been found in the billiard-balls on the table. Now, as noted in the First Lecture, there is a good deal of social philosophy which seems eminently true of billiard-balls but hardly true of men. If, however, we take certain social phenomena as typical, we shall find between these and the situation of the billiard-balls, no mere analogy, but an absolute sameness of kind. For consider what the situation involves. In the first place each ball is an isolated unit. For you, indeed, surveying them all together in the unity of your scientific point of view, they are terms in a mechanical system of relations; but for them there is no relationship whatever. Each moves in a direction determined *a tergo* by its previous contacts, and the fact that there are other balls on the same table ready to



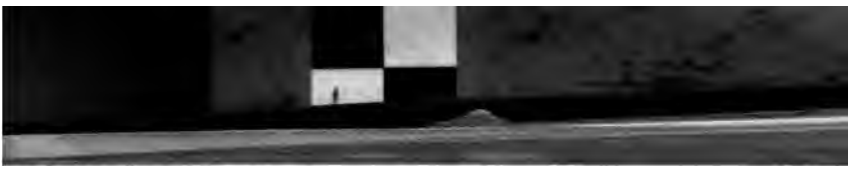
impede its movements makes absolutely no difference. Each acts, in other words, as if it were alone in the world. In the second place the movements both of each individual as such and of the group as a whole are determined by an external impersonal law. To be sure it is sometimes said, by those who seek an illustration of personal freedom in the behavior of a falling body, that the body in falling expresses its own inward nature. But the truth is that a mechanical body, as conceived by us, has no inward nature. The movements of the billiard-balls are the expression neither of individual will nor of social agreement; and any rational governing power — anything that determines their movements to be legal and consistent — lies not in them but outside of them, in "Nature" or in God. Thirdly, however, you will note that, in the absence of any social agreement, the several individuals are bound sooner or later to collide and thus to be a source of mutual retardation and interference. Only a preestablished harmony of movement could make it otherwise. And thus in the absence of social relations there is a corresponding lack of individual freedom.

Now, as I have said, this situation is precisely true of certain human relations, and for precisely the same reasons. You see it at its best in the phenomenon of the crowd, or the mob, — in a society in a state of panic. A good deal of psychology has been wasted upon the crowd; and for some social psychologists human society is simply a crowd and nothing more. The truth is, I should say, that in spite of the commotion involved in a crowd, there is less of the distinctively conscious life there than anywhere else.[6] Every now and then we read in the newspapers of some deplorable affair where

[6] See Ross, *Social Psychology*, Chap. III.



hundreds of persons have been trampled or burned to death, and the thought that strikes us instantly is that if even a few of those persons had possessed the presence of mind (note the phrase) and the degree of common sense which they apply to the ordinary problems of life, all might easily have been saved. But the man in the crowd is the relatively unconscious man. You know how it is at the ticket-office of a railway or a theatre. The man on one side of you pushes you in one direction, the man on the other side pushes you back. Of course you know, when you think of it afterward, that neither of these had any hostile intentions, and that each was being urged by the man further on. But you will be abnormally clear-headed if you think of this at the time, or if you do any thinking at all. The usual result is that thinking comes to a stop and, in its absence, you are carried away by the blind instinct of resistance and give each of your neighbors a push in return. So that presently the situation becomes an exact illustration of the kinetic theory of gases; indeed I am not sure that the theory of gases is not derived from this human experience. But in any case this situation is the same as that of the billiard-balls, — not analogous but the same. For the only relations involved are mechanical relations. The only forces at work are mechanical instincts, — that is to say, reflex arrangements in the nervous system stimulated by external mechanical objects. In the absence of consciousness the laws that they obey have no reference either to individual will or social agreement. They are simply the general and impersonal laws of nervous action. The result of their unconscious working is therefore, from any human standpoint, inevitable conflict and confusion. The individual men make as little difference to each other as the



several billiard-balls; serviceable energy is dissipated, so to speak, in heat; and no human purpose is realized in the direction either of social order or personal freedom.

§ 74. But these relations would have little interest for us if they were found only in the exceptional case. The point is that the mob-aspect is one that characterizes to a greater or less extent all of our social relations. And strange as it may seem, in the normal regions of social life it is nowhere more prevalent than in the field of industry and commerce. The modern organization of industry is regarded, justly no doubt, as a triumph of human intellect. Yet it is also recognized that, among the occupations of peace, commerce and industry are those that most resemble war. Not long ago, before the United States Supreme Court, the attorney for one of the most predatory of our predatory corporations undertook to justify his client's conduct on the ground that of necessity "war is hell." Yet commerce is adjustment. How, then, shall we reconcile these contradictory aspects of the situation? To my mind the general explanation is a simple one. The relations and activities of commerce are partly conscious and partly unconscious, or rather in varying degrees conscious and unconscious. Our age has been brilliantly successful in the conquest of nature, and hardly less so in the organization of the activities of production. But what is gained in production seems to be wasted in distribution. For somehow or other, to the average man the problem of making a living is as difficult as ever. Part of the difficulty arises of course from an expanded scale of living, but much of it is due to the fact that the gains from concentrated production are largely offset by the cost — under the present system — of expansive distribution.



To the detached view of a philosopher, say a philosopher arriving from Mars, our distributive system must present a rather curious sight. Armies of stenographers, accountants, and travelling salesmen, tons of paper and various-colored inks, millions of dollars worth of postage stamps, — devoted to what? To the promotion of mutual understanding between producer and consumer? Only partly that. Rather, as much as anything else, to mutual mystification. In other words, about nine-tenths of this distributive activity is expended in making an impression. You buy a cake of soap and a good part of the price is for a share in a two-thousand-dollar page of colored advertisement which is to incite you to buy, — and which, quite unknown to yourself, is very likely the cause of your buying. Now the brilliance of the advertisement is no argument for excellence in the soap. Such an argument, as an argument, you would clearly despise, — just as you would refuse to pay a life-insurance agent an extra fee for persuading you to take his policy, if that item were definitely specified in the bill. And no doubt the soap-maker is of the same mind. He, too, would prefer to give you your money's worth in soap. Neither of you, for example, would sign a contract to the effect that the party of the first part agrees to make a vivid impression upon the party of the second part, in return for which the party of the second part agrees to buy a cake of soap and in addition to pay two or three times its value toward the cost of the impression. And so I say that a dispassionate observer might well wonder at the methods adopted by a society of rational beings for the exchange of useful commodities. The truth is that *society* has never adopted these methods. For "society," as I have said, implies a conscious and personal relation. A social



action is an action by mutual agreement. The producer and consumer have never formed this relation. Separated by several grades of middle-men, each is to the other hardly more than a name. Their actual relation is therefore for the most part simply that of two distant members of a crowd. And just as in any other crowd, the energy that might be utilized for mutual advantage is dissipated in unserviceable commotion and noise.

§ 75. In this absence of personal relation we may discern the ground, and at the same time the field of operation, of the impersonal economic laws. The operation of these laws, as we have seen, excludes the notion of choice, either personal or by social agreement. When your retail merchant is unable to suit you either in style or price, and you learn from him that styles and prices are fixed by the manufacturer, no doubt you think that the manufacturer, at least, is free, while you are rigidly bound. But the truth is that he, like yourself, is at the mercy of supply and demand. Now this law of supply and demand has little or no relevance to a transaction conducted face to face. It would be true there only so far as each had determined to conceal his real aims from the other and at the same time to ignore any offer that the other should voluntarily make. But when two countrymen come together for a trade a rejected offer is sure to be replaced by a counter-bid, and the process continues until each has disposed of the article of property most unserviceable to himself but serviceable to the other, and has received in return a similar article, — similar, that is, in being serviceable to himself but unserviceable to the other. The process is a process of mutual understanding, of forming a conscious relation; and if ideally carried out, it results in mutual advantage and freedom. But no definite supply is opposed to a



definite demand. The formulation of the demand depends upon that of the supply, while that of the supply depends upon that of the demand. What you have, then, is not a mathematical ratio of determinate quantities, but a social relation of personal aims determined in mutual understanding.

All this is changed when the scale of commerce is extended. Economists sometimes talk about "the market" as if the market were still the market-place of a small German town, where men meet at once for the exchange of goods and for a social glass of beer. They also attach a good deal of importance to the process of bargaining, or "higgling." But under large-scale conditions the higgling must be reduced almost to a minimum. The manufacturer is, no doubt, desirous of knowing what the consumer demands, and the consumer, through the tendency indicated in his selections and rejections, succeeds to some extent in getting himself heard. But such a correspondence, conducted through a series of middle-men, and not so much by real communication as by inference from tabulated facts, is a very imperfect form of mutual response. In the meantime the commercial situation bears not a little resemblance to that of the West Coast African forest, where the seller leaves a quantity of goods by the side of the road, with the price marked, and protected by a juju, and the buyer may pay the price or leave them. Under the large-scale conditions of civilized life the seller of goods, in much the same way, faces an opaque, impersonal demand. Whose demand, he knows not. It may be a very stupid demand. But in any case it is not to be reasoned with or altered, either for better or for worse, but simply to be accepted and provided for as a hard and unyielding fact. The buyer faces a similarly opaque



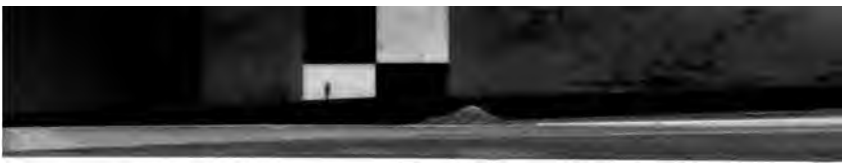
supply. The result in each case is the typical "economic man," no longer a hypothetical entity, but alive and present in the flesh; for, under the conditions as stated, "buying in the lowest market and selling in the highest" is about the only thing to do. It is impossible that this buying and selling should be intelligently adjusted for the satisfaction of social and personal ends. For the conditions are lacking in which either personal choice or social agreement could have anything to say. The one force determining everything is the law of supply and demand. To this the individual can at best oppose a certain blind resistance, adjusting himself *to* the conditions confronting him so that their disadvantages shall as far as possible be directed away from himself and fall upon an unknown somebody else.

I have dwelt upon this unconscious side of the economic situation because for our special purpose it is the more significant. I would not be understood to deny that the economic process is a conscious process. All that I say is, first that it is an imperfectly conscious process — which, after all, may be obvious enough — but secondly that to this unconscious side of the process is to be attributed that feature of the situation by virtue of which your gain is necessarily my loss. I might take up the conscious aspect of the situation and show that on this side we have a truly social organization effecting, in its own degree, both harmony and freedom. But after all that has been said this will be superfluous. Nor will it be worth while for me to offer any special argument for the truth of these relations for the social situation as a whole. All that I wish to add at this point is a reply to those who in general deny that the progress of culture and civilization — the growing self-consciousness of the relation of man to man — has accomplished



any desirable results. It is a very common saying that the effect of culture is, not to abolish the natural human brutality, but only to make brutality more refined. Civilization has not abolished war. It has only made the destruction of life a more scientifically effective process. And for the war of blood and arms it has substituted the slowly wasting process of economic war; for chattel slavery, industrial slavery.

§ 76. Now it is true that civilization has not abolished war; but I think that a comparison of civilized with savage war will precisely demonstrate my point. For, in the first place, there can be no doubt that the elaboration of the rules of war has made warfare much less demoralizing and destructive. The steady tendency of these rules has been to confine the issue to the actual scene of conflict and to leave the non-combatants at liberty to pursue their ordinary occupations. Those who smile at the absurdity of deliberately regulated killing probably fail to consider the unrestrained massacre and pillage which characterize a warfare blindly impulsive. Mere contact with the associations of the Thirty Years War, as suggested by the relics at Nuremberg and Rothenburg, should be sufficient to alter their opinion. But, apart from these considerations, civilized warfare is a more positively logical process. It is true, of course, that for a race of rational and self-conscious beings war is absurd at its best. The consciousness of the civilized world is coming rapidly to this conviction. But for a race of any consciousness whatever there are social problems to be solved; and for imperfectly conscious beings, such as ourselves, war is often the only visible solution. This being the case, it is precisely logical to define and locate the issue and to make the inevitable bloodshed an effective solution of the special



problem in question. Such is the distinctive result of civilized war and of the diplomacy by which it is regulated. And as such I say that, in spite of inherent absurdities, it is a positively logical process. More and more is it true that we go to war for a definite purpose, and not just because we feel like fighting. This definiteness of purpose converts even the clash of national interests into a more distinctively social adjustment. And it is only the lack of perfect definiteness that makes war still a necessity.

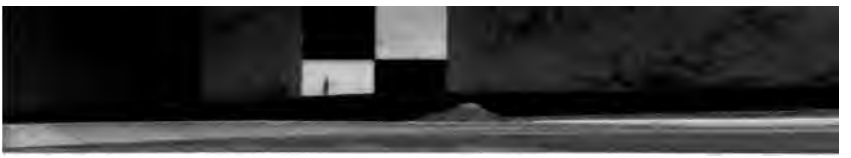
So of the economic warfare, so-called. It must be remembered that the term "warfare" is here a metaphor; and we should be careful about using metaphors without soberly noting the difference. No doubt the economic struggle is painful enough, yet I fancy there are few of us who, if the alternatives were offered, would not prefer the economic pains to those inflicted by steel and lead. And on the other hand, the competitive process, like that of war, has its distinctly logical side. How else should we measure the utility of economic productions or services except by a comparison of the results of those who are endeavoring each to do his best, — and therefore each to do better than his neighbor? This is a question which the opponents of competition have still successfully to answer. But intelligent competition, like intelligent war, is an attempt to direct competition toward these definitely serviceable ends. The present agitation against monopolistic restraint of trade is simply a further attempt to work out a "fairer," or more logical form of competition.

The same may be said of the condition of labor. It is mere rhetoric to speak of the modern labor-system as only a new form of slavery. Narrow as the opportunities of the laborer may now be, they are not so narrow



as in former times. Nor is he so close to the grinding alternative of work or starve. What has come about is not a narrowing of the conditions, but a consciousness of their narrowness, which, following the nature of consciousness, is operating rapidly to render this narrowness less of a fact. The laboring man may declaim bitterly against the slavery of his conditions, but the very fact of his declamation shows that his mental attitude has ceased to be that of a slave. I hold, then, that in all the relations of life it is better to know than not to know, better to face an issue than to bear burdens unconsciously. The man who acts with a clear consciousness of what he is doing is in every respect a freer man and a more profitable associate; and a society which has become conscious of its structure through culture and education is in every respect a freer social order.

§ 77. So much for the economic and utilitarian side of the social relation. For the purposes of our argument this side is clearly important. For those who hold the doctrine of every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost (unintelligent individualism) and those who hold the opposite doctrine of self-sacrifice for the common good equally presuppose that the world in which we live is economically a world of definitely fixed dimensions, so that the expansion of your being is bound to involve a contraction of mine. If our argument has shown anything it has shown that through the extension of his social relations the individual becomes, not less, but more of an individual, and acquires a greater individual freedom. And this in no merely Pickwickian sense. The individual does not merely "identify himself with his group" or "make their interests his own." He also differentiates himself; and through this identification and differentiation of interests he creates more room



in his world and secures, both for himself and for others, in a most practical and economic sense, a greater personal freedom. Yet, after all, it is the personal side of the social relation that reveals more clearly its typical form and meaning. And for this we must turn to those relations where the personal aspect is prominent. As I have pointed out, every social relation is so far a personal relation. And among the distinctively personal relations I include those formed through the medium of literature and art. The relations between the poet, or the painter, or the composer, and his appreciative public are of an essentially personal character even though the conditions interfere with perfect mutuality of response. A personal relation is formed whenever a serious expression of meaning meets an intelligent mind.

§ 78. Now, in these personal relations, it is clearly absurd to conceive of your Other as a being whose otherness is necessarily hostile to yourself, as one whose individual significance creates for you an offensive and invidious distinction. No doubt it seems so to the uncultivated. For them every departure from the common and conventional is an assertion of superiority. And probably none of us is so open-minded as not to feel a certain irritation and repugnance upon first contact with a strange point of view. Yet consider, for example, your world of authors. Put together such names, say, as those of Carlyle and Spencer, Tennyson and Whitman, Jane Austen, Balzac and Daudet, Thackeray, George Eliot and Anatole France, Tourgenieff and Schiller, Goethe and Tolstoi. For men of any cultivation this would be a relatively popular list. Yet what diverse personalities! But of what earthly use would they be to us if they all conformed to the



same type or expressed the same point of view, in philosophy, in art, or in general outlook upon life? And what could they say to us if they simply repeated what we already recognize as natural or proper or right? In these regions it is just the difference of personality that makes the social relation worth while. And any difference is welcome if it rest upon thoughtful and intelligent ground. All that we ask is that it be the expression of a genuine self-consciousness and not the sham individuality of the freak and the fool. So of the more intimate circle. Surely no intelligent man desires his wife to be a copy of himself, much less that she have no ideas of her own. What is required is not so much a unanimity of taste as a mutually intelligent sympathy. Perhaps he has a most beloved son, a constant source of wonder and delight, — but hardly because he is a "chip of the old block." Just as little can he endure to have it said either that he is a copy of his friends or that they are a copy of him, — or again that they are "birds of a feather." In all these personal relations the social situation, so far from presenting any necessary incompatibility between social harmony and individual independence of thought and character, shows us just the reverse, the indispensability of difference for any truly social life. It is true, indeed, that the more pronounced differences will present a more complex and difficult problem of adjustment. I do not deny that an ideally submissive wife, or for that matter, husband, will facilitate the maintenance of family peace. But provided an intimacy of mutual understanding has once been established, the very individuality of your fellow makes him a more precious and delightful object and the harmony of relations a richer and more positively social fact.

§ 79. It will be worth while to glance briefly at some



of the aspects of this personal relation. In the first place, in this even more than in the economic relation, your fellow by his very difference opens the way to a larger expansion of yourself. Here I have in mind an interchange, not merely of useful and interesting information, but of things of more intimate importance. Each of us is aware of an immensely more comprehensive self than he is able to express in overt activity. As the range of immediate vision is limited by the position and structure of the eye, so is our capacity for self-realization limited by the narrowness of our attention. We can grasp only a small portion of our world in a single act of thought. Accordingly, in order that we may have the satisfaction of doing something thoroughly and well, we specialize along the line of our more important interests, leaving the rest of our nature unsatisfied and known to us chiefly as a field of undeveloped possibility. Yet not quite so. For when you hear a symphony of Beethoven or Tschaikowski, or read a novel of Tourgenieff, or something of Anatole France, these remoter regions of your nature are roused into actuality. You feel, if you would only confess it, that you, too, might thus have expressed yourself if your life had not been absorbed in other things. It has been said, indeed, that every man has one novel in him, and under a pledge of secrecy most men would probably admit it. It is not a question here of a mechanical instinct of imitation. The personal response to the work of art awakens the artist in yourself; otherwise you would never respond. It is not *his* novel that you wish to write, or would be happy to have written; for no one else could exactly express your own outlook upon life. Nor, in the most delighted appreciation of the work before you, are you merely receptive. For an exchange of ideas is very



different from an exchange of goods. In the case of ideas what is received never is, or can be, just what is given. Every idea that you receive is so far your idea. Every act of appreciation is also an act of creation; and the more lively your appreciation, the more positive your critical reaction. The more intelligent your enjoyment, the more it is spontaneously creative. Contact with your fellow — through the work of art or in friendly intercourse — simply rouses to activity and self-consciousness the remoter aspects of yourself.

But, in the second place, not only does this intercourse with others broaden the range of your self-consciousness, it also furnishes the basis of contrast through which you become aware of yourself, and define yourself, and are enabled to assert yourself as a distinct and unique individual. A young man goes forth into the world and finds, not merely a world of grown men, but himself as a grown man among them. Through intercourse with men of maturity and force he for the first time, as we say, "finds himself." In measuring himself with them, and in passing judgment upon them, he finds out where he himself stands and what he is able to do. He is thus enabled to assert himself as a member of society, an individual among other individuals, holding a position which belongs to him and to him alone. But all this is a question of the extent to which the relation is a conscious relation, to which he approaches the world in the attitude of a self-conscious and responsible agent, determined to know where he stands. Not every man who enters the world finds either a world or himself. But so far as you find yourself in a world of significant men, you find yourself a significant man with significantly personal ends. Each significant individual in your world then furnishes a special ground of contrast by



virtue of which you find a special character in yourself, a new distinction between yourself and others, and become at once a richer and more unique personality. In this aspect of the personal relation lies, in last analysis, its personal value and importance. The bare presence of splendid individuals in your world means nothing to you. As a self-conscious and responsible agent you cannot express yourself in the worship of others, however admirable and impressive. For you the value of their personality lies in the fact of the social relation, — that through intercourse with them you also become a significant individual and secure a position for yourself in the aristocratic circle of significant and free beings.

And yet, or perhaps, therefore — my third and last point — this cannot mean that our fellows are to be regarded as mere means in relation to ourselves as ends, — as grindstones, so to speak, for the sharpening of our own individuality. This view of the matter is forbidden by the nature of social relation. For you and your fellow are parties to a social distinction. If he is a mere negative, can you, the other party, be a positive reality? If his point of view is meaningless and his ideals valueless, can yours be positively significant? Or, again, if he is simply wrong, can you give a positive meaning to your right? Here we encounter one of the most fundamental of metaphysical problems: if an individual truth or reality implies and necessitates its opposite, must not the opposite have an equal justification with itself? Yet, in adopting a point of view as your own in contrast to that of another, do you not banish your other to the outer darkness of negation and falsehood? It is clear that the problem has an intimate bearing on the question of social relations, and it was with this very consideration in mind — that every



individual being implies an Other — that Hegel denied any significance to the individual as such and made him a feature of merely passing importance in the larger social whole. We may not pause to consider the problem in its broader aspects. All that I suggest is that we recall once more the difference between mechanical and conscious reality. From a mechanical standpoint it is undoubtedly true that an assertion of your own reality and importance implies the minor importance of your Other. For here the underlying criterion is spatial, and spatial sizes and importances are of necessity mutually invidious. But nothing of the sort applies to the relations of conscious agents. My worth does not diminish yours, nor does our mutual reliance diminish in the least our individual significance. Rather, as I have sought to show, the very *differentia* of the conscious relation is that it makes the individual independent through relationship — which from a mechanical standpoint would be quite paradoxical.

And in point of fact the relations of men in the higher cultural regions tend to assume precisely this character. In philosophy, in literary criticism and in art, the tendency of intelligent criticism is to reject the simple categories of true and false, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, and not so much to condemn a point of view because it is the opposite of your own as to mark and stress its otherness. For my own part I cannot conceive of a student of philosophy who should be content to separate all the splendid names in the history of his subject into groups of true and false. To me, indeed, the fascination of the study lies in assuming them all to be true; and then in asking from what intelligible standpoint, from what angle of personal character, each came to say just what he did. And I find myself often



in most cordial appreciation of those whose point of view is most removed from my own. So, in personal intercourse, it may well happen that the man for whom you have the heartiest affection is just he who takes issue with you in the most uncompromising way; so that, in Hegelian fashion, the very sharpness of contradiction breeds sympathy. Yet this is not to reject as meaningless the category of true and false. For that shallow and sceptical generosity which holds that any man's view is as good as any other's I have no sympathy whatever. Not every man who chances to assert himself is to be admitted to rational society. Neither is every expression of personal opinion to be recognized as a contribution to truth; but only that which shows itself to be the serious and well-considered expression of a genuine personal meaning.

With this I conclude the argument of this Second Lecture. There remains, indeed, a further point, — to show, namely, that for a conscious agent, and more especially for a society of conscious agents, the natural environment is so far an elastic quantity. But I shall offer no special argument for this point, partly because it is already more or less covered in the general argument for the efficiency of consciousness, and partly because any further argument that our time would admit of has been given in the last section of the First Lecture. I can only repeat the two main points; first the *a priori* argument that, if consciousness be conceived to have any efficiency whatever, if it be in any way concerned with human action, the utility and serviceability of the material world must of necessity be conceived as directly coordinate with the development of the consciousness that deals with it; and secondly the *a posteriori* argu-



ment that, as a matter of historical fact, the availability of nature for our uses has constantly increased with further development of intelligence; and this in spite of many scientific predictions of a proximate ultimate limit. To be sure this may all be and yet conditions may arise for which even the combined human intelligence will be totally unprepared. It is possible, for example, that the earth may be suddenly destroyed by collision with a heavenly body. But such considerations are so remote as hardly to bear upon the question of social relations. From our point of view it will be sufficient to note that, within the range of our field of consideration, — within the range, say, of the astronomical present, so far as that is clear — the natural environment is still an indefinitely elastic quantity depending for its value to us upon the degree of our intelligence.

§ 80. To review our argument, — through an analysis of the nature of consciousness I have endeavored to show, first, that the individual, so far as he is conscious of himself, is a free agent, capable of realizing ends of his own and no longer subject to Nature's laws; secondly, that a society of conscious beings is so far a society of free beings, mutually free, capable of realizing mutually agreed upon ends, and no longer subject to the impersonal laws either of economics or of physical Nature. On the other hand I have shown that so far as men are not conscious, and are not conscious of their mutual relations, their behavior is a matter strictly of impersonal natural law. And as I have also shown, the unconscious side covers in varying degree a large part of human life. Accordingly, in the doctrine of these lectures you will discern no undiscriminating optimism. Any philosophy that undertakes to vindicate the efficiency of consciousness presupposes, indeed, an optimistic motive; so much



I freely admit. Yet because the problem is located within the conscious self it is not thereby solved. As long ago as Socrates it was recognized that the most difficult problem of life is to know yourself. For us it is the whole problem. Yet to have located the problem at this point is, as I conceive, a great gain. For it means that the problem is theoretically soluble and it points the direction of the solution. For our special purpose it means that there is no inherent contradiction between social welfare and individual freedom; and therefore that the duty of self-sacrifice for the common good is not merely paradoxical, but unintelligent. Every self-conscious agent has, in the nature of things, a right to complete self-realization. And as rational beings we are bound to assume that every social problem can be completely solved by careful analysis and adjustment of individual aims. Such adjustment will involve proximately a detailed study of each problem presented, but ulteriorly something more comprehensive and permanently effective, namely, that general state of mutual understanding which is the product of an enlightened culture. And this perhaps I may leave with you as the most important general consequence of our view. If consciousness is real and efficient, these higher aspects of mind are no mere by-product of evolution, no mere adornment of life, but the very substance of life and the force by which it grows. To them, therefore, in their extension and development, we must look for any general progress in the direction of a more perfect social adjustment, — to the physical and social sciences as furnishing the ways and means, but not less to the more liberal pursuits of philosophy, literature, and art, in which, most of all, men are brought into communication on their finer and more personal side.





LECTURE III

INDIVIDUALITY AND SOCIAL UNITY





LECTURE III

INDIVIDUALITY AND SOCIAL UNITY

I The Evolution of the Individual

Our Second Lecture has endeavored to show that the presence of consciousness in human life creates, in corresponding measure, both individual worth and freedom and harmonious social adjustment. Consciousness, individual freedom, social unity, — my thesis is that these three conceptions, or factors of human life, each implying variations of degree, are strictly coordinate. And from this we draw the conclusion that the popular moral ideal of self-sacrifice for the common good is without substantial basis.

In this lecture we shall be concerned, on the positive side, with this conclusion. The point of view of the Second Lecture was mainly psychological; here it will be mainly ethical. Our chief purpose, as indicated in the title, is to inquire into the relations of individuality and social unity from the standpoint of moral and esthetic valuation. Our aspiration is for social unity. But what kind of unity? Is it a unity without difference? Or a unity that endures difference? Or a unity of which difference is a coordinately necessary feature? Which of these conceptions of unity represents for us the ideally good and beautiful? But this question involves us in certain others. The validity of moral ideals is associated in many minds with the question of origin and original intent and may no doubt be properly



related to the motives at work in the process of development. And since most anti-individualistic theories rest upon the assumed priority of the social impulses, it is important for us to see what the real relations are. Then there is the further question: assuming that a unity of mutual advantage is ideally beautiful, is it moral? Can an act which involves no sacrifice of self be conceived as meritorious? I shall take up these questions in the following order: first, the position of the individual in the process of social and moral evolution; secondly, his position in the ideal social unity; and thirdly, the question of virtue and self-sacrifice.

First, then, the position of the individual in the process of social development. Is he in any sense a posterior or subordinate term in a primarily "social" process? This question, already dealt with by implication, we have now to take up from a standpoint explicitly genetic.

§ 81. At the beginning of our First Lecture I dwelt upon the tendency of later nineteenth-century thought to lay the burden of emphasis upon the social order. It is of course quite to be expected that a view which locates in the social the rational ground of things should find there also their origin and historical first cause. And so we find in the later nineteenth century a theory of origins which exactly reverses that of a century before. In the thought of the eighteenth century the first state of man, called "the state of nature," was assumed to be one of absolute individual independence, and society was the result of a contract formed, either expressly or by implication, between free individuals. In the later theory society comes first. Historical criticism had effectively disposed of the state of nature. It is clear that human life must always have been a community life. And a study of the facts of primitive life



shows the individuals to be distributed in small groups, or clans, of apparently marked solidarity. From this the conclusion is drawn — illogically, and as we shall see erroneously — that the primitive impulses of men are distinctively "social." That is to say, the first and strongest impulse of the man is for the welfare of his group. Considerations affecting his own welfare are relatively weak and unimportant. Indeed, according to the common view of primitive life, the individual was almost without ends of his own, and had scarcely any individual self-consciousness. His life was practically absorbed in that of the clan, the distinction of individual aims being a later and decadent development.

§ 82. The history of the race is repeated in the individual. According to the view before us, here too, in the individual of today, the social is genetically prior to the individual. From an external standpoint the primitive impulses of the child may be derived from two sources, heredity and environment. To the agent himself, indeed, the hereditary impulses appear to represent something individual, — a force set over against the influences of his social environment. But trace them to their source, and you will find that both are equally "social." For the individual is a composite result. He is the child, not of individuals, but of the race. And among his hereditary impulses the strongest — those which rest upon the broadest foundations of heredity, those, too, which are best preserved by natural selection — are the impulses common to the race; and these, as a result of the selective process, are the impulses which represent the most perfect social adjustments. Hence, it follows that the individual is predisposed by heredity to the common good. He is so constructed at the outset as to find in this his chief satisfaction.



The same account is given from the standpoint of introspective psychology. According to the view before us the child's first and most natural impulse is toward imitation. As stated by Professor Royce,[1] the child knows others before he knows himself; and he knows himself, it would seem, chiefly as a selection from what the others offer him. To be sure, the process of selection implies that beside the tendency to imitation there is a tendency to opposition,[2] but of the two the imitative tendency is earlier and more significant. In other words, the social consciousness comes first, the individual self-consciousness comes later. A similar view is expressed by Professor Dewey[3] when he says that the primitive consciousness of the child is a consciousness of objects, as distinct from a consciousness of self, or personal feeling, and that the primary aims of the child are for objective results. Here he follows Professor James' theory of instinct. The meaning of James' theory will be clear if we note its contrast to the hedonistic or pleasure-theory. According to hedonism all action is stimulated by a desire for pleasure, *i.e.*, for a pleasant feeling, which in last analysis is the pleasure of the agent himself; and this motive is held to be specially clear and obvious in the early stages of life, both of the child and of the race. Hence, for hedonism, the primary and original human impulses are exclusively egoistic. As against this view Professor James holds that all human action has its

[1] "The child is in general conscious of what expresses the life of somebody else, before he is conscious of himself. And his self-consciousness, as it grows, feeds upon social models, so that at every stage of his awakening life his consciousness of the Alter is a step in advance of his consciousness of the Ego." *The World and the Individual.* Second Series, p. 261.

[2] *Outlines of Psychology*, Chap. XIII.

[3] Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 375.



ground in certain hereditary tendencies which we call instincts. Now an instinct, so far from aiming at any general result, such as pleasure or self-satisfaction, is a specific tendency to deal with a specific object in a specific way, its direction being fixed by paths already established by heredity in the nervous system. When, therefore, the instinct operates in the life of the child — when, for example, he grasps at a bright object — he is not thinking of the attainment of pleasure; his immediate desire is for the object. In other words, the attitude of the naïve mind is thoroughly impersonal and disinterested. Only the sophisticated mind, which has tasted and compared the enjoyments afforded by various objects, can make personal feeling the end. This is the ground, then, upon which Professor Dewey holds that human impulses are fundamentally objective and social. The natural and instinctive — hence, the right and proper — end of our action is not personal satisfaction but the attainment of those objective ends which are common to the race, and to which we are committed by the structure of our nervous system.

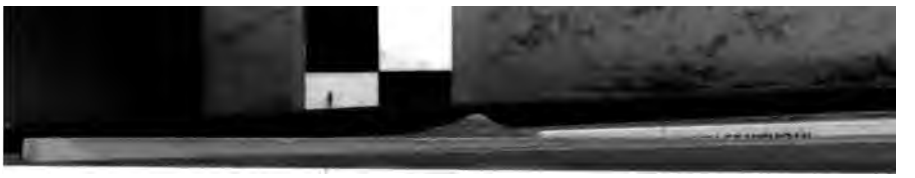
So much for the psychology of the view in question. The meaning of it all is that, both in the individual and in the race, the development of ideas and of ends is from the communistic to the individualistic, from the altruistic to the egoistic. The natural state of man is "social," — a state of indistinguishable identity of aims, — the distinction of individual aims being a product of culture. And to this natural state of man we must look for an authoritative statement of his moral and social ideals.

§ 83. For our purpose this is highly important. If we are to make the meaning of our individualism clear we must place it against the background of current



thought and define its meaning by contrast. And nothing figures so largely in current thought as the matter of mental development. I think, therefore, that instead of dealing with a view which is in the air, but which in all its aspects belongs to no one in particular, we shall do well to take up a typical expression of it and look at this somewhat in detail,—after which we shall be in a position, in the next division of this lecture, to state the formal principles of our individualism. For this purpose I select the view expressed in the "Ethics" of Professors Dewey and Tufts, — partly because it represents the most recent and the most explicit consideration of the moral problem from a social standpoint, and partly because it furnishes the best illustration of the ingrained exaggeration of the social in the present state of thought. For after all no such exaggeration is intended, it being the purpose of the authors to formulate a "moral democracy," a name I should apply to this formulation of my own.

In Part I, for which Professor Tufts is mainly responsible, you will find a very interesting summary of the history of moral ideas. The point of emphasis here is the solidarity of the primitive clan. This, however, did not exclude the consciousness of individual ends, though these are assumed to have played a subordinate part. The order of development is then stated as a development, on one side at least, toward individualism. Is this individualism a moral advance? Professor Tuft's answer is clear: in some sort of individualism lies the very essence of morality. Indeed, the beginning of morality in the proper sense is found in the transition from "custom" (*i.e.*, blind acquiescence in group-standards) to "conscience," where the course of action is reflectively and voluntarily chosen. But what is the gain in result?



Is the world made better in a utilitarian sense by the exercise of choice? Here the answer is qualified. On the whole, no doubt, the world is made better — much better, in fact, — since a community of reflective persons constitutes a much more efficient social organism. But the gain is not without a loss. We have lost something of fellowship and sympathy in social life, while the effect of culture upon the bad man is to render him only more efficiently vicious; naïve selfishness becomes deliberate selfishness.[4] Moreover, every step in advance, both in society and in the individual, is attended by some retrogression. But, now, once more, what is the significance of the power of self-conscious choice for the individual? Does the revelation in him of personal ends and values and the power to realize these values, — does this make him a source of value in himself? Does it endow him with the right, and impose upon him the obligation, of realizing these ends? Does it say to him, "There is *your* ideal. Let that be the center of *your* aims and aspirations"? To this question Professor Tufts makes no explicit answer, but his general attitude leaves little room for doubt. There is no value in individual ends as such. There are no individual rights but those conferred by society. The state of individual moral choice is, indeed, better than the state of custom, but the "better" is measured always by the same standard, — by the importance of the individual to society and not by his importance to himself.

§ 84. Yet you will find, I think, a greater appreciation of the individual in Professor Tufts' historical interpretation than in Professor Dewey's analysis of theory.[5] In his chapter on "Happiness and Social Ends" Pro-

[4] Chap. IX, or in particular pp. 171 and 190, also pp. 75, 79.

[5] Part II of the *Ethics*.



fessor Dewey raises the question, How are you to obtain happiness, *i.e.*, to satisfy yourself, in the ends of society? His answer is: you never can if your happiness lies in the satisfaction of personal aims. Bentham tried to square the two, *i.e.*, self-interest and social welfare, by suggesting various arrangements, political, juridical, economic, social, for making unsocial conduct individually unprofitable and social conduct profitable. But all such devices are temporary in their effects and morally pernicious;[6] and the identity of individual and social welfare which they bring about is accidental and artificial, — a mere coincidence. There can be no genuine identity of interests except as the aims of the individual are inherently and intrinsically social, — except as he finds direct satisfaction in the common good. The basis for such satisfaction is in point of fact already present in the constitution of human nature; for man is by nature social. "Our social affections are direct interests in the well-being of others." The good of others is "an intrinsic constituent factor" of our own happiness.[7]

[6] P. 302.

[7] These quotations occur in the following passage on page 294: "The importance of this changed view [Mill's rather than Bentham's] lies in the fact that it compels us to regard certain desires, affections, and motives as inherently worthy, because intrinsic constituent factors of happiness. Thus it enables us to *identify* our happiness with the happiness of others, to find our good in their good, not just to seek their happiness as, upon the whole, the most effective way of securing our own. Our social affections are direct interests in the well-being of others; their cultivation and expression is at one and the same time a source of good to ourselves, and, intelligently guided, to others."

Note also the following:

"It could only be by accident that activities of a large number of individuals all seeking their own private pleasures should coincide in effecting the desirable end of common happiness." P. 289. (Would Professor Dewey say that the success of a stock-corporation is an accident? Yet surely the desire for dividends is a private desire.)



So far, then, it would seem that there is a preestablished harmony between the interests of the individual and those of society, — or at least between the social interests and a certain part of the individual nature; for it is recognized that, beside the social instincts, there are others exclusively egoistic. Rather should we say, however, that there is a preestablished altruism; for these social instincts seem to be aimed exclusively at the good of others. Hence, since "the end, the right, and the only right end, of man, lies in the fullest and freest realization of powers in their appropriate objects,"[8] "it is a question of finding one's good in the good of others";[9] of "finding his happiness or satisfaction in these ["associated"] activities, irrespective of the pains and pleasures that accrue";[10] or, once more, of developing "that type of character which identifies itself with common ends, and which is happy in these ends just because it has made them its own."[11]

"If it is asked *why* the individual should thus regard the well-being of others as an inherent object of desire, there is, according to Mill, [and also according to Dewey] but one answer: We cannot think of ourselves except as to some extent *social* beings." P. 294.

"Unless the intrinsic social idea be emphasized, any association of private and general happiness which law and social arrangements can effect will be external, more or less artificial and arbitrary, and hence dissoluble either by intellectual analysis, or by the intense prepotency of egoistic desire." P. 296. On the next page he says that the value of these arrangements to the individual "is not that they are contrivances or pieces of machinery for making the behavior of one conduce more or less automatically to the happiness of others, but that they train and exercise the individual in the recognition of the social elements of his own character."

[8] P. 300.

[9] P. 295.

[10] P. 298.

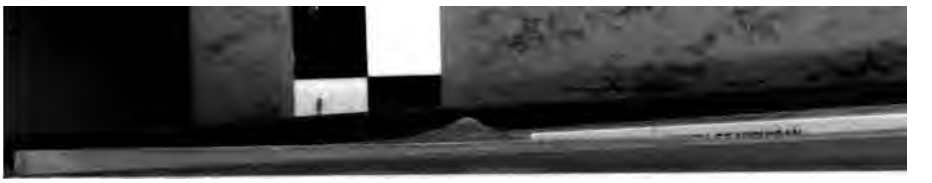
[11] P. 302. Note, however, that "because it has made them its own" is very different from "because they are inherent."



In a later chapter[12] the emphasis is somewhat shifted. You will now find, instead of an inherent interest in the good of others, an inherent impersonality and disinterestedness in the constitution of desire. In other words, a preestablished altruism of social instincts is here generalized into a preestablished and exclusively outward reference of all instincts. And at first reading it may seem that we have misinterpreted the former chapter; for now it appears that "the individual's interests are naturally in objective ends which are primarily neither egoistic nor altruistic; and these ends become either selfish or benevolent at special crises, at which time morality consists in referring them, equally and impartially for judgment, to a situation in which the interests of self and of others concerned are involved: *to a common good.*"[13] This sounds so nearly like our

[12] Chapter XVIII on "The Place of the Self in the Moral Life." This is probably the most important statement of Professor Dewey's theory of social duties.

[13] P. 375. But what is the common good, and how far does devotion to the common good differ from plain altruism? Suppose that the good in question be that of myself and nine others. (1) If the proposed adjustment gives to each all that he wants, we may call it, for convenience, a common good, and in working for it I should be working "equally and impartially" for myself and for others. Only, in that case, there would be no special reason for emphasizing the common good, since it would be clearly implied in my own; and my own good would be as effective a motive as any other. Suppose, however, that, humanly speaking, such an adjustment is impossible, and that the common good demands some self-sacrifice. What is the meaning now of "equal and impartial" consideration? (2) Does it mean that I claim the same for myself that I allow to the whole group of others? This would be equal consideration in one sense, but it may be dismissed as without warrant one way or another. (3) Does it mean, then, that "everybody is to count for one and nobody for more than one"? This is what it usually means. And from an impersonal, or common, standpoint this would be equal consideration, but from my own standpoint very unequal.



own doctrine that criticism may seem to be misdirected: desires are naturally neither egoistic nor altruistic but become so by virtue of a conscious distinction, which then demands their complete coordination. But I beg you to note that they are still naturally objective; and under this apparently neutral designation Professor Dewey reinstates the predominant altruism of the earlier chapter, at the same time adopting from Professor James a conception of the conscious side of instinct which we shall see to be erroneous.

The good, he says, is a social whole which realizes equally my own good and the good of others. If it be a systematic whole — and what else can be a whole, particularly a social whole? — then it would seem that one might enter the system of good at any point, whether of self-interest or of others' interests, and reach the same result. Should I, then, trusting to this systematic relation, be safe in making self-interest — my personal happiness — the guide of life? By no means, Professor Dewey will reply; the good consists, not in personal happiness, but in objective results. These will indeed bring happiness in their train, but to make happiness the aim is from a moral standpoint both vicious and absurd; it amounts to putting the cart before the horse.[14]

For now I give nine times the consideration to the good of others that I give to my own. Or to put it in other words, devotion to the common good now differs from pure altruism by only ten per cent.

[14] This is Professor Dewey's figure. But if the cart is permanently harnessed to the horse, can you choose the horse without choosing the cart? For example, suppose that a man engaged to marry a penniless girl learns that she has unexpectedly inherited a fortune. Can he claim, while keeping to the engagement, that he does not now deliberately choose to marry the fortune as well as the girl? According to the principles stated by Professor Dewey himself (in Chapter XIII) every foreseen consequence becomes a part of the motive, for or against. Hence

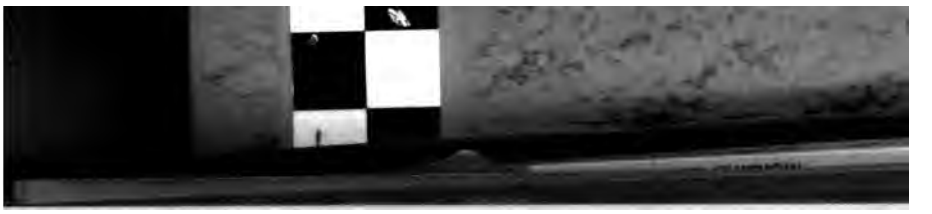


Well, then, ignoring the claims of happiness, may I safely aim at the development of personal character? Again, no; for though the development of personal character, or self-realization, is the inevitable result of the moral life, it may never be the aim. "The artist . . . may practice for the purpose of acquiring skill . . . but the development of power is not conceived as a final end, but as desirable because of an eventual more liberal and effective use." [15] At least, however, may I not center my efforts upon those *objects* which express *my* personal interests? Still, no; for this assumes a "ready-made self";[16] *i.e.*, a self specifically defined in advance of the process of comparison in which the distinction of self and others first appears. "It is not the business of moral theory to demonstrate the existence of mathematical equations, in this life or another one, between goodness [here personal happiness] and virtue. It is the business of men to develop such capacities and desires, such selves as render them capable of finding their own satisfaction, their invaluable value, in fulfilling the demands which grow out of their associated life." [17]

§ 85. To me this passage seems highly ambiguous, and we might let it go at that if it did not, as a matter of fact, conceal precisely the point we are seeking. I shall therefore put one more question: Does Professor Dewey mean that *after* I have measured myself with others, and have discovered what I want and what they want, I may *then* take my stand upon what I want and

if the fortune by itself is a good thing to have, it cannot but add, in the present case, to the desirability of the match and form a positive factor in the aim. If, then, happiness is a similarly foreseen consequence of virtue, as it must be for one who accepts Professor Dewey's view, can you aim at virtue without aiming at happiness? And on the other hand, if you aim at happiness could you fail to reach virtue?

[15] P. 394. [16] P. 396. [17] P. 396.



insist that the social arrangement, while satisfying the personal interests of others, now severally defined, shall also satisfy mine? Listen to his answer: "The patriot who dies for his country may find in that devotion his own supreme realization, but none the less the aim of his act is precisely that for which he performs it: the conservation of his nation. He dies *for* his country, not *for* himself." Again, "it is impossible that genuine artistic creation or execution should not be accompanied with the joy of expanding selfhood, but the artist who thinks *of* himself and allows a view of himself to intervene between his performance and its results, has the embarrassment and awkwardness of 'self-consciousness,' which affects for the worse his artistic product. . . . The problem of morality, upon the intellectual side, is the discovery of, the finding of, the self, in the objective end to be striven for; and then upon the overt practical side, it is the *losing of self* [italics mine] in the endeavor for objective realization." [18]

And so, it seems, we are to find ourselves in the objective social ends, but never under any circumstances to find them in ourselves; rather, even after finding "ourselves," to lose ourselves again in them. This seems to me a strangely mystical termination for a "moral democracy." And I prefer to believe that Professor Dewey's view is better expressed in the passage in which the interests of self and others are to be referred to an "equal" and "impartial" judgment, vague as these terms may be. The present interpretation, however, is in accord with the James-Dewey theory of the original objectivity of instinctive desire. We come into the world with instincts already directed outward, — upon objects. We become conscious of

[18] P. 393.



these instincts, of their objects, and of our relation to them. Does this consciousness make a difference? Does it alter the direction of the instincts? Does its revelation of personal aims and of our power of choice mean that we should turn these objects to our own account? For Professor Dewey, not at all. The sole function of our consciousness is to make the objects clearer, to accelerate and render more effective the original drift of the instincts toward objective ends. And this should be our sole moral ideal. Self-consciousness, in other words, is a vice. The function of consciousness in the individual is merely to assist in the realization of the plans already laid down by Nature or Society.[19] The obtrusion of self into the process is no doubt a necessary evil; but it should be treated as such; that is, as a by-product of evolution, as something which when found is to be lost again; in a word, as a temporary and decadent stage between an original and a final state of absolute disinterestedness.

§ 86. To the last clause of this I doubt if Professor Dewey would assent. Yet I think it may be taken as a legitimate inference from his general point of view. For you will have noted that whether primitive desires are to be interpreted as positively altruistic or as neutrally disinterested, in either case the primitive gives us the original meaning of human life, which we have now more or less forgotten, and which it is our proper aim to reinstate and fulfil. In this you may recognize a very ancient and pervasive tendency of human thought, — the tendency, namely, to conceive the general order of things as something which was perfect and harmonious in the beginning, which has been disturbed by difference and discord, and corrupted by distinctions, and must

[19] See the statement of the functional theory of consciousness, § 61.

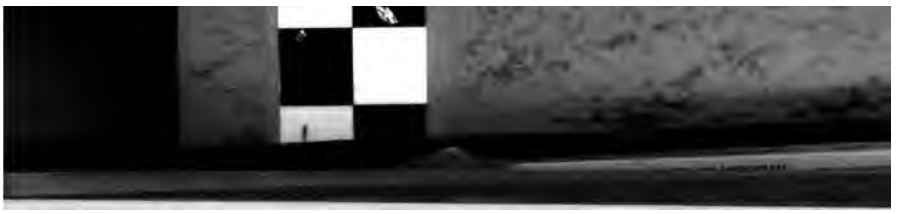


again be brought back to the original unity. In the earliest Greek thought we find Anaximander deriving the world from an "infinite" out of which all things arise and to which they return by their destruction, in order, as he mystically conceives it, "to render to each other atonement and punishment for their offense against the order of time." And all Greek philosophy rested upon a cosmological background of periodic disturbance and return to unity. The same conception appears in the biblical account of the Garden of Eden; of the fall of man due to the dangerous and unfortunate tree of knowledge; and of the final readjustment and purification upon the millennial last day. The Christian millennium reappears, unwittingly, in Spencer's "last stage of evolution"; the Garden of Eden in the Golden Age of the eighteenth century. More recent thought has rejected the notion of primitive freedom, but the Golden Age is still with us, and our anthropology, sociology, and psychology are full of the glorification of primitive man. Yet even the Greeks felt that the reinstated unity could not be quite the same as the primitive. And for modern science and modern evolutionism a complete identification of the two is manifestly impossible. The final stage must be in some sense an improvement upon the first. Yet, apparently, not the intervening stages. Adolescence is conceived to be less attractive than infancy. Rustic simplicity is much to be preferred to the semi-culture of the newly rich, the newly sophisticated and emancipated. The raw is at any rate better than the half-baked. At this middle stage it is felt that culture has produced nothing but corruption. So of our modern individualism. The common impression would be, I think, that while its distinction of *meum* and *tuum* may be a necessary feature



of the progress toward a higher unity, in itself it marks a decadent aberration from the ideal social order which primitively was and finally is to be.

§ 87. With the several points of the anti-individualistic view now finally before us I shall proceed to their refutation. First let me say that this argument from origins attaches an altogether mistaken importance to the psychology of the primitive mind. I would not be understood to say that the primitive mind is unrelated to our own, only that, as a "simple," "elementary," and easily definable basis for the explanation of the complexities of mature thought, it is wholly illusory. The mind of the child, for example, — even of your own child — is the mind that you understand least. As compared with the mind of your colleague or friend its operations are baffling and mysterious. Likewise of the primitive man. His monuments — his language, his art, his apparatus of social customs — are indeed of fascinating interest, — just because of their strangeness. Their significance *for him* is a matter mostly of our interpretation from the standpoint of our own way of thinking. Assuming our interpretation to be correct, he is still not an authority for moral ideals. For this, I cannot urge too strongly, is to deny that our consciousness is efficient or that there is any real evolution of intelligence. For us, as self-conscious and responsible agents, it is not a question of what is primitive, "natural," or "inherent" in human tendencies, but of what is intelligent, enlightened, and, if you like, sophisticated; and the more sophisticated must be accepted as authoritative over the less. Or, in other words, the *causes* of conduct — of conduct not yet subjected to criticism — may be found in these primitive tendencies; but for the conscious agent the question is not of cause but of ***value;***



and the value of conduct is the expression of enlightened deliberation.

Moreover, we are not concerned with any question of absolute beginnings. There appears to be a beginning of the individual. There may have been a beginning of the race; and possibly of consciousness. But no beginning is conceivable from the standpoint of consciousness itself, — and especially not from the standpoint of a genetic analysis. For a genetic or evolutionary series is by its very nature infinite in both directions, and any assumption of either a beginning or an end can only be arbitrarily intruded from foreign sources. What concerns us, then, is not the beginning of social and moral evolution, but the mode of transition from any prior stage to a later. This is the point of real interest in the child and folk-psychology. Our interpretation of the process in ourselves seeks confirmatory illustration in the process at other stages. It is with this point in mind that I now proceed to the main question.

How shall we conceive the order of development of ideas and motives in the primitive and infant mind? Shall we say, with Professor Royce, that the child knows others before he knows himself, and that he appropriates their ideals before he develops any of his own? Or with Professor Dewey that he is first aware of objects and primarily interested in objective ends? Or shall we say, on the other hand, with the hedonists and associationists, that he is first aware of his own ideas and feelings, and that from the ideas he infers the existence of objects, and for his own pleasure he decides to take an interest in other persons? To these questions my answer will be: neither and both, — that is to say, one just as much and just as little as the other. My point will be that the slightest assumption of temporal priority



either of subject or of object, or, in a social situation, of self or of others, is so far inconceivable from the standpoint of a conscious agent and inconsistent with the nature of consciousness. I shall endeavor also to show that the whole matter of the exaggeration of the social is a case of what James has called the psychologists's fallacy. It involves a confusion of the situation as conceived by you, the psychologist, with the situation as conceived by the mind you are studying. Or, as I prefer to say, it overlooks the difference between a mechanical situation and the conscious grasp of that situation, between an action regarded as a mechanical fact and the same action self-consciously directed.

§ 88. Suppose we take Professor's Royce's statement that the child knows others before he knows himself and see what we can make of it. Think of your family at dinner with your infant child, say six months old, propped up in his high chair by the side of the table. Is he aware of the presence of the others, but unaware of his own presence? Would the situation be just the same for him if his bodily presence were, by a sort of forcible abstraction, stricken out of it? Nothing of course could be more absurd. Is he, then, aware of himself, but not of himself *as* himself? In that case he is not aware of the others *as* others; for obviously they are "others" only by contrast to self. In a word, then, he is conscious of no social situation whatever. For that matter any hint of the priority of the awareness of others involves a denial of the fundamental condition of all consciousness, the condition, namely, of comparison. The only thing that could make the statement plausible is a failure to distinguish between our view of the child and his surroundings and his own view, or between the set of mechanical facts and the child's grasp of the facts.



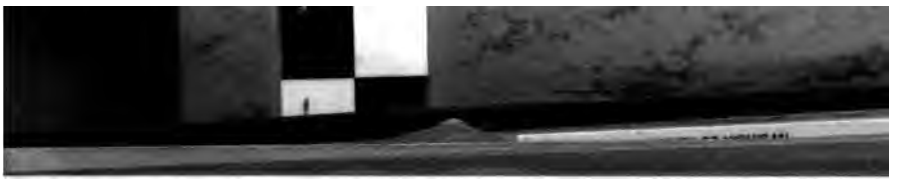
We note that his distinct consciousness of himself is a matter of slow growth, whereas the physical and social situation in which he is placed is *to us* perfectly clear; it ought therefore to be clear to him. But this does not follow. If the child's grasp of himself is slow, so also should be his grasp of the situation before him. And not of the social situation alone but of its simplest mechanical aspects. We have no right to assume that what is obvious to us is obvious to him, and that the familiar chairs, tables, dishes, pictures, windows, etc., etc., so readily distinguished by us from each other and from the human objects, are equally distinct for him. For him there is absolutely nothing to accelerate the development of his consciousness on this side rather than on the other. His grasp of himself is indeed imperfect, but equally imperfect is his grasp of the world.

§ 89. Our next point has to do with that much overworked and little analyzed category of imitation. Since the child knows others before he knows himself, it follows, we are told, that he adopts the point of view of others before forming any of his own and evolves his own out of theirs. Here again it is important first of all to know whether the situation that we have in mind is a conscious situation or a relation of mechanical facts. When we say that the child appropriates by imitation the ideals and valuations of others, do we mean that he consciously and deliberately does what he sees others do, because he is impressed with its worth? Or merely that, by virtue of an unconscious instinct, embodied in the structure of his nervous system, he copies and repeats what happens to be done in his presence? With regard to the latter, I doubt if there be any evidence for a general copying instinct, *i.e.*, an instinct to repeat what is done in one's presence irrespective of what it may be.



The fact of imitation, — that men, and especially children, constantly do what they see others do — this must be freely admitted. The question remains whether repetition of the act is due to the others' example as such, or whether this example simply furnishes an initiatory stimulus — a stimulus that might just as well come from another source, from nature or from self — which rouses to action a common human instinct. However this may be, let us admit that imitation is in some sense a mechanical fact. This fact, I say, is irrelevant. The question is not whether we do in fact tend to repeat the actions of others, or whether in fact children repeat the actions of others before they form plans of their own, but whether *as a fact of consciousness* they first *appreciate* the importance of others' actions and from this derive an importance for their own.

Now, as a fact of consciousness, the priority of imitation of others is quite inconceivable. Conscious imitation is never mere imitation. Common sense testifies to this when it couples with "imitation" as expressing its essential attribute, the adjective "blind." Conscious imitation involves at its lowest terms some factor of selection. Even the child does not imitate anybody and everybody. And it is a fact, I think, that the very young child — the child less than a year old — shows few signs of imitation, — just because he has developed as yet no personal ground for determining what to imitate. And when he begins to imitate, and for some time after, his imitation is no special compliment to "society"; for he would as soon imitate a locomotive as his own respected parent, — unless, indeed, the parent happens to be a soldier, a fireman or a policeman. At every stage, then, the imitation, so-called, is the expression of a personal ideal. But then, so far as this is true, it is not mere



repetition. Even the child does not simply follow the example of others. Nor, above all, is this ever his deliberate intention. The same might be said of many grown persons who are accused of aping their superiors. It may seem so to others; to themselves the adoption of a peculiarity of manner or dress is either unconscious or the expression of an independent personal valuation. Likewise the child. His play is not "play" for him, but reality. And he resents the imputation of doing something "just because Daddy does it" as soon as he is old enough to know what this means. So far as he becomes aware of the nature of his act, in this or any other aspect, he undertakes to alter it in the direction of personal choice. The degree of choice may be slight, but it is quite as clear as his consciousness of the significance of his act in any other aspect. And if it seems otherwise it is because we overestimate the child's awareness of what he is doing and assume that the several aspects of his act are as plain to him as to us.

When we assume that the child must as a matter of course begin by adopting the ideals of others, what we have in mind is this: We think of the child as thrust unexpectedly and without preparation into a fully organized society. What can he do, then, but adopt the existing social standards as a preliminary basis for conduct? This is of course what you or I would do if we took up our residence in a foreign country. But not so the child. He is not in a foreign country. He has never been in any other. The beauty of the existing social order is therefore all wasted upon him. And the wisdom of proceeding cautiously in a new environment is something he knows nothing about. For the adoption of the current standards he has consequently no psychological basis. It may happen that he does as others



do. If so, the ground must be sought in something beyond his consciousness. Any conscious choosing of these standards will involve, so far, an already developed individual self, which will then express itself, not by mere repetition, but by a reinterpretation of the current usage to fulfil its own individual meaning. I hold, then, that as a fact of consciousness imitation is never prior to personal choice.

§ 90. If the argument from imitation fails to establish the priority of the social what shall we say now of the argument from heredity? The argument from heredity is a very familiar one for all sorts of purposes. For the present purpose it is claimed that since the individual is the heir, ultimately, of a large part of the race, his instinctive tendencies must be for the most part directed upon the general rather than his own private good. But here again there is a failure to distinguish between mechanical action and action become conscious, — between the working of an instinct as a reflex-arc in the nervous system and the working of the same instinct as the conscious expression of desire. Regarded merely as a nervous arc, the hereditary tendency has properly speaking no "direction" whatever; for "direction" implies some foresight of an end. It acquires direction by becoming conscious; but then, I hold, its direction can never be exclusively "social."

Take any hereditary tendency. Take the case, say, of the son of the drunkard, who is popularly supposed to inherit a specific and fatal appetite for drink. According to the heredity-theory his desires are set from the beginning upon alcoholic stimulation and, if the opportunity offers, he will, other (external) things equal, drink himself to death. And so he will, *if he forgets*, — if, that is to say, he leaves out of account the character of



his antecedents and fails to note the direction in which his life is moving. For in this case the *causes* of conduct — heredity and environment — are left to work themselves out without hindrance. But here of course we are leaving consciousness out of the question. And if we make the illustration perfect we must say that he does not even *desire* to drink, nor really know that he drinks — he simply drinks. But when once he knows, then everything is changed, — and in the measure of his knowing. For he cannot know what he is doing without asking how far he wishes to do it. And when this question is raised it is no longer a matter of causes but of reasons. Hereditary tendency may be a cause of unconscious action; as a reason for conscious choice it is altogether irrelevant. For that matter it may constitute, as in the present case, the strongest reason for abstinence. The hereditary tendency become conscious is therefore completely revolutionized. To a conscious agent it is never a question of what his ancestors did, or of what satisfied them, but of what satisfies him. However he may be related to them through the inheritance of family or racial traits, his conscious reaction upon his inheritance is something unique, original and peculiar to himself.

The case is not different when the tendencies in question are for the common good. Certain of our inherited tendencies are no doubt specially adapted for the survival of the race, in particular the sex-instinct. Among the lower animals the strength of the sexual instinct is the sole guarantee of the preservation of the species. And among the lower orders of men, where it acts with a relative lack of consciousness and foresight, it produces commonly its "natural" result. But it would be absurd to say that the large families of the ignorant



and poor are the expression of social responsibility. Nor could any intelligent man regard the strength of his sexual desires as a *reason* for begetting an unlimited number of children. On the contrary, there is, as we have seen, no more conspicuous instance than this of the way in which the natural laws of heredity are revolutionized by the appearance of consciousness. As men have learned the nature of the reproductive process and the possible means of control, they have undertaken to control it for ends of their own choosing, — and of their own individual choice. Such is the inevitable, as it is also the rational, result of knowledge. A man may believe that larger families of the intelligent classes are required for the welfare of the state, and he may take an active part in a movement for reaching this result. But if he recognizes any special individual responsibility, on the part of himself or of others, he must at the same time insist upon the removal of any special burdens or disabilities which may rest upon the parents of large families. If the individual is to raise children *for the state* the state must make it worth his while.

§ 91. So much for the specifically altruistic view. What shall we say, then, of Professor Dewey's theory that consciousness is primarily of objects, and that instincts are primarily (not altruistic, but) disinterested? To this it might seem sufficient to reply, No object without a subject. But the peculiar plausibility of the view requires that we go further and see where the fallacy lies. This view is based, as we have seen, upon the James theory of instinct, which, again, is a reply to the hedonistic, or pleasure-theory. Now, according to hedonism, it would seem that the child comes into the world with a self already made. That is to say, his mind is already fixed upon the attainment of personal



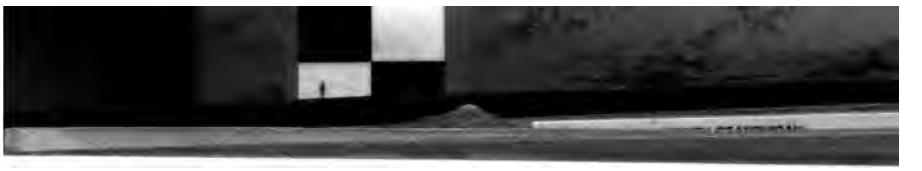
satisfaction, or happiness, the nature of which is also already clear. His conduct is therefore from the beginning a deliberate pursuit of happiness. But, as Professor Dewey rightly claims, this is an obvious mistake. The child's action is anything but deliberate. When the appropriate object is placed before him he seizes it almost as inevitably and automatically as the moth flies into the candle-flame. And it was no doubt with this in mind that James declared all action to be primarily instinctive and directed upon objects. According to him no action is originally conceivable except upon the basis of a reflex-arc already arranged for a given response to a given stimulus.

Now I will grant that all action is originally instinctive. This is by no means to say, however, that it is originally directed upon objects. The truth is that James, Dewey and the hedonists are guilty of the same psychological fallacy. The hedonists endow the infant with the self-conscious motives of the mature man. James and Dewey give him the mature man's view of his physical and social situation and assume that the mechanical outcome of his instinctive action is as plain to him as it is to them. Or to put it otherwise, they all fail to distinguish between an instinctive action as a mechanical fact and the same action as a self-conscious fact. The question is, What is meant by an instinct? If you mean the bare fact that a given object produces a given reaction by means of a given reflex-mechanism, then I say that the instinct has no "object" whatever. In that case the infant's action is no more "directed upon objects" than the act of the moth or the steam-hammer. Do you mean, however, that the reaction is conscious? If so, I hold that it must be interpreted from the standpoint of a conscious agent, and in particular from the



standpoint of the degree of consciousness to be attributed to the infant before us. And when this point is made clear the notion that the infant's action is directed exclusively upon objects becomes manifestly absurd. To take a time-honored illustration, a bright object — say, a red ball — is placed before the infant and he seizes it. Does this mean that the infant is aware of the presence of the ball but unaware of his own presence? Or that he knows the-object-being-seized but not himself-seizing-it? Or, again, that he aims to have the object seized but not himself to seize it? All this would imply a strange *hiatus* in the infant mind. Indeed, the very difficulty of making these distinctions clear shows how intimately the different aspects of the situation are implied in each other. The truth is that the infant knows himself just as well — and just as little — as he knows the object, and while intending to do something to the object he aims no less to gratify himself. Indeed, I cannot see how these two aspects of the situation — of a conscious situation — can possibly be separated. It is true that he does not know either his subject or object as you know yours. But to say that he knows only the object is to give him your consciousness of the object with his own consciousness of self.

§ 92. I have said that the infant knows himself-seizing as clearly as he knows the-object-being-seized. You may ask, however, what "himself-seizing" means. Is not what he knows here after all nothing but his own body in a certain position? And is this not simply one object in a world of objects? Perhaps this is the consideration which Professor Dewey has in mind. If so, it is only the same fallacy in other terms. For we have to remember that this world of definitely distinguished and



exactly located objects is the world of reflective thought, the product of a highly developed logic of science. It is not there for the infant. And it would be an extremely psychological infant who should identify himself with his physical organism or (with Professor James) locate his emotion of fear in its internal movements. But let it be so. Resolve, if you like, all your actions into those of your body, all your needs into its needs, and call the subject simply "that object." I say that the distinction of subject and object is as conspicuous as ever and as clearly as ever present in any stage of consciousness. For "that object" possesses a unique character which marks it off, even as an object, from all other objects in your world. It is the object, and the only object, which furnishes the point of view from which all other objects are surveyed and their values estimated. It is thus the central point from which your view of the world radiates, and which gives to your outlook upon the world a character which can belong to none other. In your experience of the world this "outlook" is as real and, if you like, as objective a factor as any other. As we have noted before, a photograph is never merely a photograph of an object, but of an object from a certain angle; and the photograph is as much a photograph of this angle as it is of the object itself. So of your experience of the world. The more clearly you analyze the objects of that experience, the more clearly they are seen to have for you a character which is determined by their relation to "that object" which you call your body. "That object" has then the unique distinction of being the only object that determines all the others. Call it "object," if you like; it has none the less just those peculiarities that belong to "self."

§ 93. If, then, the distinctness of object-conscious-



ness is paralleled by an equal distinctness of self-consciousness; if it be true that increasing control over the world is marked by a correspondingly increasing consciousness of personal ends; then it seems very absurd to say that after the labor and pain of winning ourselves, and of reaching the dimensions of personal agents with definitely individual ideals and ambitions, we should simply again "lose ourselves" in the field of disinterested effort. To me this is to emulate "the King of France with his ten thousand men." And I think this is a convenient place to consider Professor Dewey's doctrine on this point, especially as illustrated in the self-forgetfulness of the artist. For undoubtedly this supposed self-forgetfulness and victory over "self-consciousness" expresses a very general moral and esthetic ideal. But is the artist really self-forgetful? Does he really aim to extinguish the consciousness of self? I think that Professor Dewey has here appropriated a bit of loose popular psychology without subjecting it to the test of scientific criticism. What we commonly call "self-consciousness" is undoubtedly a blemish both in art and in morals. But the question is whether the fault lies in too much or too little. And in my view it is clearly the latter. For it is the inexperienced artist, philanthropist, public speaker, political reformer, or what not, who is "self-conscious." And the difficulty is not that he is conscious of holding the center of the stage, or of deriving honor or profit from the situation, but that he is not sufficiently conscious of himself and his relation to the situation to know where he really stands. The young artist is embarrassed by praise because he is uncertain of what is due; he is sensitive about selling his pictures because he has not yet grasped the fact that the laborer, even in art, is worthy of his hire; and if



jealous of the merit of others it is because he is not yet assured of his own. The novice at public speaking goes astray in his argument, — because he remembers himself? Rather because, in the novelty of the situation, he forgets himself, falls into confusion and loses sight of his purpose and meaning. In other words, he is unable to grasp all at once, in a single clear idea, the related facts, first that he is a certain A.B., ordinarily a private citizen, but now, secondly, a public speaker. And so, once more, of the "self-consciousness" of the person unaccustomed to the usages of polite society. Would you counsel him simply to forget himself? Really, that is not what you mean. For is not "Don't forget yourself" the constant admonition of the wise father to his son? In other words, "Do not let the excitement of the occasion tempt you into boastfulness and extravagance." And as a matter of fact the man who behaves himself fittingly on all occasions is the man who has measured himself with others and thinks of himself, not more highly, nor yet more lowly, than he is — but justly.

What is indicated, then, as a corrective of "self-consciousness" is not less consciousness of self but more, not self-forgetfulness but the assured self-confidence that comes from perfect self-knowledge. And paradoxical as it may seem I will say that this certain self-confidence that comes from a clear knowledge of self — a very different thing from "blind self-confidence" — is the foundation of all that is truly great in art or in life. The "unconsciousness of greatness" is an illusory external manifestation of this very thing. When a man of power forbears to make claims for himself it is because he so certainly knows.

Very curious consequences may be deduced from Professor Dewey's position. For if self-forgetfulness is the



mark of virtue in the artist, why not in the locomotive-engineer or college-president? The ideal college-president would then be he who could give you every detail about his college except the name and address, and especially the salary, of its president. If this strikes you as trifling I will ask you to consider as a serious question how a man can be keenly alive to the situation with which he has to deal, yet unconscious of his own relation to it. Shall we say, for example, that Beethoven was unable to appreciate the perfection of structure and the wealth of originality in his own compositions? Or that, with an eye to all this, he was still unable to see the difference between his own music and that of Mozart and Haydn, and thus to recognize his meaning as his own? To this Professor Dewey would perhaps reply that a man is not so much to forget, as deliberately to ignore, himself and his own interests, — to throw away the self that he has found. But I submit that facts are not to be ignored, either in the physical or in the moral world. And less, if anything, in the latter. Your house which has been damaged by fire may be repaired, repainted, and made as good as new. But when a man has declared his love for a woman they can no longer be "just friends." So, when you have discovered and defined a personal interest in a given situation, your attitude can no longer be impersonal. And it seems to me that the assumption of the impersonal attitude involves a certain element of priggishness, or for that matter, of hypocrisy. If I undertake to teach a class of students I assume that I know more of the subject than they. Why, then, should the assumption not be recognized, by me as well as by others? And how shall I teach efficiently if I am in doubt about it? Or again, if I am earning my living by teaching, what virtue — what



truth? — can there be in professing that my sole motive is to perform a social function? Professor Dewey says that every foreseen consequence of an act becomes an element in the motive. So, I hold, every discovered relation of self to the situation creates a self-interest; which is then not to be ignored but to be satisfied. The adjustment of this with the other elements of the situation constitutes the moral problem; and in ethics as in mechanics the solution of a problem is accelerated by a clear recognition of the elements involved.[20]

[20] In Sabatier's *Life of Saint Francis of Assisi* (Houghton's translation, p. 184), it is related that Brother Mosseo, wishing to put the modesty of Francis to the test, asked him mockingly why he should be the center of attraction, being neither beautiful, nor learned, nor of noble family. Francis' answer was: "It is because the eyes of the Most High have willed it thus; he continually watches the good and the wicked, and as his most holy eyes have not found among sinners any smaller man, nor any more insufficient and more sinful, therefore he has chosen me to accomplish the marvellous work which God has undertaken; he chose me because he could find no one more worthless, and he wished here to confound the nobility and the grandeur, the beauty, and the learning of the world."

Can he have believed this? It seems to me that such a question is suggested inevitably by a passage like the above. Not "was he sincere?" In believing that this was the view he ought to take of himself he was certainly sincere. But was this view compatible with his intelligence, as displayed in the other aspects of his life? He had been no extraordinary sinner, as sinners go, even in his youth. At the present time he was not only a great moral force, but an administrator of excellent ability and judgment. If he had carried this sense of worthlessness into the government of his order his work must surely have come to naught. Does a profession of humility which ignores the facts add, then, to the moral beauty of his life? To my mind it is quite otherwise. And to me the impressive thing about the life and character of Francis is the intensity and unshakeableness of his belief in his work, — a belief which emboldened him to treat on equal terms with the pope himself, and was really in last analysis nothing less than a sp'endid self-confidence and self-assertion, only marred by the professions of humility.



§ 94. Having now disposed, as I hope, of the priority of the social in the child it remains only to apply the same principle of criticism to the psychology of primitive man. For the sociological fallacy involved in the assumption of a preponderant devotion to the common good on the part of primitive man is only another case of the psychological fallacy which has just been pointed out. The primitive clan exhibits, let us assume, a distinct solidarity, a clear submission of the individual will to the authority of the group. For us that would mean a conscious recognition of the paramount claims of the common good. But it need not mean this for primitive man, any more than the movements of the heavenly bodies mean for him that the earth revolves upon its axis. It is admitted that the primitive man is very imperfectly conscious of the facts and relations of the physical world. On what ground may we claim for him a highly intelligent grasp of economic and social relations? Yet this is precisely what we imply when we attribute to him a high regard for the solidarity of his group. We note the fact of solidarity, we derive the reasons for it — the reasons that we should have, — and then we attribute our reasons to primitive man. We even go further. Because the solidarity of the primitive clan is a fact easily grasped, and more self-evident than the really greater solidarity of a modern civilized nation, we assume that it is higher in degree; we then endow the primitive man with a higher social intelligence than our own. We might as well attribute the same social intelligence to the beasts in the herd, or for that matter to the several parts of a machine. And here I think we have the true point of view — using it in a properly relative sense — for the explanation of primitive life. The primitive life is a relatively unconscious life. The primitive



condition of mind is not so much a clear perception of things as a vaguely mystical feeling. The primitive society is thus less a conscious relationship than a mechanical fact. No high sense of the value of social unity binds men together. They just stick together; and, relatively speaking, in much the same way as the cattle or the parts of a machine; because of the mechanical structure of the individuals and their space and time relations. The primitive individual has no very distinct consciousness of himself, and just as indistinct a consciousness of the presence and characteristics of his neighbor. He obeys the group-authority, — not, however, from a recognition of value, but as the result of inherited instinct and habit. In a word, then, the primitive state is, relatively speaking, not a social state but a pre-social state. And when we attribute to the primitive individual a high regard for social welfare we are taking a term from a situation in which it has a meaning and thrusting it into another situation in which it has little or no meaning. For only as the individual has a meaning of his own can he attribute any meaning to the social order.

A suggestion of the probable mental attitude of primitive man may be derived from certain features of modern life. The well-disciplined child does not *recognize* the authority of his parents; he simply fails to question it. It is a very wise child who believes that his parents "know best." The same attitude existed a few centuries ago with regard to the divine authority of kings; and it is the attitude today of those persons for whom the will of God is the ultimate moral authority. The will of God can hardly be said to be explicitly recognized. Rather is it, as formerly the case with the divine right of kings, an act of impiety to raise the question. Yet



when men began to study the constitution of states the question of royal authority was inevitably raised. And the question took the form of asking by what service to the individual citizen the king could rightfully demand his obedience. Every opaque form of authority must meet this question when the exercise of authority becomes a conscious fact in the minds of men, — the authority of God no less than that of the king; and no less than these the authority of "society" and the state.

§ 95. In this criticism of the theory of the priority of the social motives it will be seen that I do not deny that the desires of men are social. That men could be what they are or get what they want apart from the social relation is for our thought of today too obviously absurd. What I insist upon is the fundamentally reciprocal character of the social relation and the fundamentally self-interested attitude of the individual who consciously accepts this relation. And I may conveniently close this criticism by pointing out once more the ambiguity of the term "social" upon which the opposing theory rests and which lends such plausibility to the essential disinterestedness of human desires. When Aristotle says that man is by nature a political animal he means, of course, that the individual is by nature such as to find his chief good in association with other men; but he is very far from meaning that the individual locates his chief good in the good of others, or that his attitude is in any way disinterested. A disinterested and outward direction of desire and a demand for a life of associated activities — these two conceptions are all the world different. Professor Dewey's argument consists in making them the same.[21] One may grant, as I do, that man

[21] I think that Professor Cooley, in his *Social Organization*, is guilty of the same confusion when he says (p. 37) that "those who dwell pre-

is a social being, in the sense that it is not good for him to be alone; it by no means follows from this that his social intercourse is determined by a regard for others, or that it is not determined at every point by individual ends. A game of cards with two or three others may be far more worth while, and a more humane form of enjoyment, than a game of solitaire; but this does not mean that I am in the game for the purpose of losing to my friends. The grocer and his customer find their good in the maintenance of a social relation; but I do not buy my groceries for the benefit of the trade, nor is the grocer in business "for his health," or for mine. It is indeed true, then, that the good of the individual is to be found only in social life; it is none the less true that he is in society for individual ends.

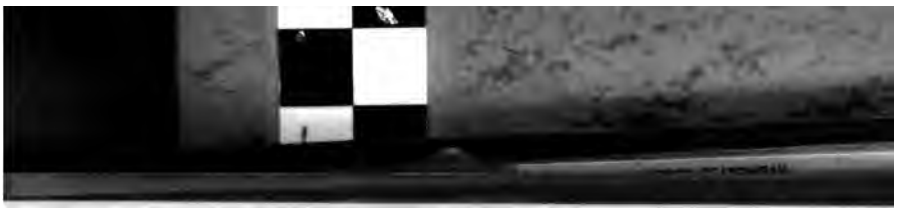
ponderantly on the selfish aspect of human nature and flout as sentimentalism the altruistic conception of it, make their chief error in failing to see that our self itself is altruistic, that the object of our higher greed is some desired place in the minds of other men, and that through this it is possible to enlist ordinary human nature in the service of ideal aims." A desire for a place in men's minds, as the object of fear, or admiration, or even of love, is surely a very different thing from a disinterested desire for their welfare.



II The Formal Principles of Individualism

The purpose of all this criticism of the anti-individualistic view is to make the meaning of our individualism clearer by contrast. To a certain extent I trust this purpose has been realized in the criticism itself. We have now, however, to state the results of our discussion in explicit form. The view which has been the chief object of our criticism holds that men are inherently, by nature and heredity, social-regarding and disinterested; and that, therefore, as they become self-conscious, they adopt this tendency as marking the direction of their moral ideal. The contrary, hedonistic view, which has appeared only incidentally in our discussion, holds that men are by nature self-regarding and that a regard for social welfare is the product of education and experience. Our individualism differs from both. I hold that men are *by nature neither* self-regarding nor social-regarding but that they become *by culture both.* The implications of this general statement may be conveniently expressed in a brief series of dogmatic theses.

§ 96. *First, then, by nature, in the sense in which we have used the term, men are to be conceived neither as self-regarding nor as social-regarding, but as impersonal mechanical facts.* Here of course I make a sharp distinction between nature and culture, between the individual regarded as a complex of neural mechanisms and the same individual become a self-conscious agent. It may be urged that since it is the peculiarity of just such mechanisms to become self-conscious, and since a higher degree of self-consciousness is the distinguishing peculiarity of human nature, men should rather be described as by nature conscious agents. To this I should gladly



assent; and indeed it is in this sense that, in the next lecture, I shall offer a justification of the theory of natural rights. But in the meantime we have used the term, following the usage implied in the view under criticism, to refer to the original constitution of our instincts, to instinct not yet subjected to culture. And in this sense I say that, whatever their mechanical constitution, the instincts have no *direction* whatever. The natural man, in other words, is neither selfish nor generous but only a fool. And this rude statement embodies to my mind a most important ethical truth. The moral significance of conduct is a question not of its "natural" constitution but of its meaning. It has no meaning until as conscious conduct it expresses the desires of an individual agent. The ideal, or criterion of value, is then a question of the direction which these desires take as they become more conscious.

§ 97. *Now, secondly, so far as the individual man becomes a conscious individual, and comes to know where he is, what he is doing, and what he wants, he becomes never less self-regarding but always more so.* And I hold this to be true absolutely, for every point on the scale. It makes no difference what has been the nature of his previous activities. He may have been unconsciously self-sacrificing to a very high degree, contributing of his time and money, like Goldsmith's "Good-Natured Man," to every altruistic demand presented to him. That is, he may be "naturally generous." None the less, when he comes to the point of a serious examination of his conduct, of forming an explicit conception of its results and a clear estimate of their value, he finds that he is bound to consider the situation before him in its relation to himself and to estimate its values in the light of his personal ends. And I hold that this will be ever truer



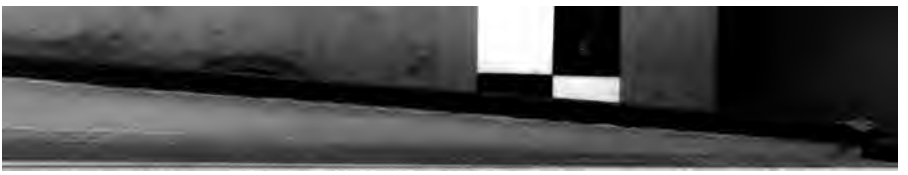
the more reflectively he considers the situation and the more seriously he acknowledges a personal and moral responsibility. The more explicitly he recognizes an obligation as binding, the more insistently he must demand that it show a relation to ends that are valuable to himself; for otherwise it can neither *bind* nor bind *him*. And all this I hold to be the necessary derivative of the fact that he is a conscious agent. The whole moral significance of his being conscious lies in the fact that thereby he becomes, no longer a means for the ends of others, but a personal agent with ends of his own and the power of realizing his ends. This fact imposes upon him as his highest duty the duty of self-assertion, — not, indeed, the blind self-assertion of the brute or the fool, but the reflective and deliberate self-assertion of the intelligent man, who, having a clear conception of his personal aims, has an equally clear conception of the conditions through which his aims are to be realized.

§ 98. And this brings us to our *third thesis: that very knowledge which shows the individual himself shows him also that he is living in a world with other persons and other things, whose mode of behavior and whose interests determine for him the conditions through which his own interests are to be realized.* Self and the world, subject and object, — neither of these is conceivable in isolation. If there can be no other without a self, there can equally be no self without an other, no knower without a known, no agent apart from a field of action. I hold, then, that just this knowledge of the nature and presence of others is sufficient to impose a genuine social obligation, and that nothing else is needed to account for any aspect of social responsibility. And the point here is not the social relation, *i.e.*, not the relation between subject and object as fellow-members of the same biological species,



but the knowledge-relation. In other words, the relation which knowledge sets up between myself and my human fellows, however superior in intimacy and importance, is not different in principle from that which it sets up between myself and other material things. In neither case does the recognition of another involve a denial of self. Yet when I have perceived even a chair standing in my way I can no longer proceed as if it were not there. Nor will it be profitable as a rule simply to kick it out of the way. In dealing with things, as with persons, we have to consider what they will do and what they will not do. We make ropes of hemp, wire of steel, furniture of wood. As Aristotle would say, we endeavor to realize the form implicit in the matter. And our success in dealing with nature depends upon our grasp of its various capacities. In "subjugating" nature to our uses, we in the same act adjust ourselves to the uses of nature.

Just so with our fellow-men. When I find another man standing in my way I may kick him aside as I would the chair; but, quite apart from other considerations, this is a poor use to make of him. Humanly speaking, it may under certain circumstances be the only possible use, — as when I am confronted suddenly with an enemy, or with a competitor in the field of commerce. But such circumstances, however inevitable, are cases of ignorance. I do not thoroughly know his purposes, nor my own as related to his. I have not yet investigated what may be gained by working in cooperation. So far, however, as the circumstances permit of calm deliberation, I shall inevitably consider the uses to be made of him as a partner and a friend. The simplest dictates of intelligence declare this to be the rational point of view. But then I shall be in logic bound, as in



dealing with mechanical objects, to consider what he is good for and what he is not good for, — in other words, his capacities, his wants, his tastes, and his ideals; and the meeting-points of these with my own. For only as I secure his free cooperation, along the line of his chosen interests, — only thus can I get the best out of a man, whether as a servant, a partner, or a friend.

The logic of the social relation is thus precisely that of self and mechanical objects. Only, this social adjustment is far finer and more comprehensive. There are few uses to be made of a chair. It is therefore a relatively uninteresting object, — socially speaking, a very remote neighbor. Your sailing-boat, whose points you perfectly understand, your favorite horse, who responds at once to your word, — these present rather more points of contact with your personal interests. But with your human fellows the possibilities of contact are infinitely numerous, infinitely subtle, complex, and various. It is a question only of the extent to which you and your neighbor are individually self-conscious and mutually Other-conscious, — to the extent, in other words, to which your relation is that of persons of developed intelligence. So far as this is the case your human neighbor is transformed from an impersonal and socially remote to an intimately interesting object, and you regard him, no longer as a mere means, whose "interests" have little relation to your own, but — so far — as an end in himself, to be admitted, as Kant would say, into the Kingdom of Ends, because the ends which represent him have now a vital relation to your own.

And so I hold that just this knowledge which I have of my fellow as a member of my world — the same knowledge that reveals to me myself and that places me also in a world of physical objects — is sufficient



to constitute a genuine social obligation; and that so far as I know my fellow I become in logic bound — by the same logic that binds me to get out of the way of an approaching train — to include his interests among those to be considered and — not to prefer them to my own, nor to give them "an equal share" with my own, — but to place them among the various interests involved in the moral problem and to see that, as bearing upon my own, they are as far as possible satisfied.

I pause for a moment to answer a possible question. I have said that your neighbor is to be made use of for what he is worth to you; also that a self-conscious agent becomes as such an end in himself. Is there any contradiction here? To my mind there is none whatever, — if you remember, first, that he is to be intelligently used, secondly, that he is to be treated as an end in himself only so far as he is himself intelligent. And it should be remembered always that the responsibility for making his intelligence clear rests, not only upon you, but more if anything upon him. Yet even in cases of minor intelligence it is often possible to make the best use of a man by giving him just the position he wants. I have been told that in our Southwest, the problem of the "bad man" was solved by making him a deputy-sheriff, and I believe that a similar disposition has been made of the brigands in some parts of Europe. It may be that the problem of "the trust" is to be solved in the same way. In any case, apart from the justice of the comparison, the principle will be the same, and the same for good and bad. In dealing with one of your human fellows, from your standpoint as individual or from that of the state, the simple question is, What can be done with him? What can we get out of him? Now it is obvious that we can get more out of him if the service that we demand



is along the line of his personal interests. And if he has any personal interests — if his conduct represents genuine personality and intelligence — he will assist in solving the problem. In merely considering his personal interests we shall be treating him in a true sense as an end in himself. But so far as he is not an intelligent personality he has no claim to such consideration. He may then — so far — be regarded merely as a means.

§ 99. This brings me to my *fourth thesis*. By what methods is the solution of this problem to be effected? I answer: by the very methods which Professor Dewey condemns as artificial and immoral. In other words, *the social relation is to be adjusted by just those methods of practical intelligence and ingenuity which we use when we combine various ends in the construction of a house or a machine, — that is to say, by the method of technical adjustment.* The only difference here is that the terms to be adjusted, being the ends of intelligent beings, are as such more adjustable, and therefore that the statement of the problem, as represented in the mutual understanding, forms a larger part of the solution. On the other hand, the mutual understanding involves in itself the consideration of the technical possibilities.

Accordingly, in the larger affairs of state our aim would be to embody such a provision for individual ends in the adjustment of economic functions and political rights that each citizen would judge it, not so much dangerous to evade his responsibilities, as from every point of view obviously unprofitable and absurd; that is to say, his special interests would be directly and positively included in the terms of the social adjustment. In the more personal relations we should endeavor so to fit together our own mode of life with that of our associates that each would not only move freely in the attainment of his



own ends but at the same time further the ends of his fellows. Any widely pervasive condition of this kind would imply no doubt a high degree of intelligence both on the part of those who devised the adjustments and of those who accepted them as the terms of the social agreement. It would require, for example, a very finely conceived system of taxation to provide, in the absence of special penalties, that the disadvantages arising from a failure to make public improvements because of a non-payment of taxes should fall chiefly upon the tax-dodgers themselves; and a very intelligent tax-payer to reckon his own loss. In the absence of intelligence the technical adjustment would be necessarily imperfect to a corresponding degree, and for the more necessary purposes the "sanctions" of social-regarding conduct would to some extent take the form of penalties rather than rewards. But without intelligence there would be no genuine adjustments whatever. And on the other hand the very use and meaning of intelligence is to effect these technical adjustments. The social problem is not to be solved by preaching brotherly love. Social unity is no mere feeling. Except as it reflects an economic condition in which men are actually linked together by ties of self-interests mutually fulfilled, the feeling of unity is a mere illusion.

So far, then, from regarding this mode of approaching the problem as artificial and immoral, I hold that nothing could be more truly natural or more truly moral. If we regard as significant of the nature of man his capacity for acting consciously it can never be unnatural to be intelligent. And if this capacity enables a man to draw dividends for his services to others, and so to institute a concrete and real unity of interests, such a unity is certainly the most natural form of social adjustment.



For it realizes exactly the social meaning of his being conscious, and fulfils exactly, as no other course would fulfil, the responsibility which his consciousness lays upon him of realizing his personal aims. If you say that it leaves out the question of character, I shall reply that "character" is nothing but the developed and established capacity for straight thinking and for consequently well-directed action. It would be false, again, to say that I am making morality easy. Morality as I have defined it would be anything but easy; but on the other hand it is absurd to hold that the performance of social obligation should not be as easy as possible. Nor is it to the point to urge that these technical adjustments are temporary in effect, that they call for constant readjustment, and fail therefore to provide a permanent basis for social order. They are temporary in effect only if intelligence be withdrawn. And an intelligent appreciation of personal advantage is, I should say, at least as permanent and reliable a motive as a habit, an assumption, or even a feeling of brotherly love. But if intelligence vanish from the world civilization itself is temporary. And your furnace fire is temporary. It is also, in the brute sense, most unnatural. The "natural" man belongs only in the tropics. But just as furnace fires and the other appurtenances of civilized life are most natural and most moral for conscious and intelligent beings, so I hold that the method of technical adjustment is the most natural and rational method of securing a social unity of interest.

§ 100. One more point remains; not so much a separate thesis as a corollary of my second thesis. For I fancy that some opponent who has reserved his fire may now assail me with this: "And so what you propose is a principle of social morality constructed out of deliberate



selfishness." Precisely this. Whether you say "selfishness" or use the nicer term "self-regard" is a matter of no consequence. Only, please be careful not to omit or to ignore the qualifying term "deliberate." For, in opposition to Professor Tufts,[22] I hold that *the deliberateness of self-regard makes a difference on the positively moral side;* and all the difference in the world, — the difference between social self-regard and unsocial self-regard, between a self-regard that is broad-minded and generous and one that is narrow and mean. Let us make this point clear. I do not deny that there is a "deliberately selfish man" whom you and I condemn. It does not follow from this that we condemn his deliberation, or that we should praise his conduct if the deliberation were not there. His premeditation makes him, indeed, a subject for moral *judgment*, since unpremeditated conduct has no moral quality whatever; but our moral *condemnation* means, not that there was too much premeditation, but rather that there was too little. We condemn him because his deliberation stopped at such a short distance and revealed a self capable of so little breadth of view. In other words, the deliberateness of his act, in showing that it was due to no passing forgetfulness, reveals the size of the inner conscious man. Yet even so we must judge the deliberate man to be a nobler object than the same man undeliberate; for the undeliberate man is so far a mere brute — a machine. The deliberate man is also a socially more serviceable instrument. For you can argue with a "deliberately selfish man," but never with a fool. And so I say that what we condemn is not the intelligence and definiteness of his self-regard but the absence of more of it. If we suppose his act to have been more fully deliberated we

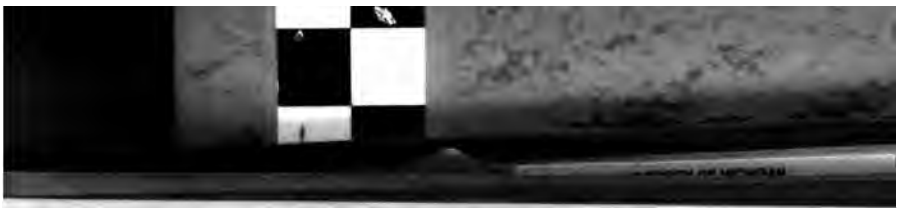
[22] See § 83.



cannot but suppose him to have considered more carefully the plans and purposes of the others whom his action affected, if only as determining their probable reaction. Had he done this he must have studied the possible combinations of plans for the advantage of both. And thus, I say, just by virtue of your more thorough deliberation, you become, not less selfish, but indeed more clearly so, yet at the same time certainly broader in view, and in a true sense more generous.

And here also we may see by contrast what is really meant by the "selfish" man. In last analysis he is simply the "inconsiderate" man, *the man who fails to consider*, — not he who thinks of himself, but he who fails to think of others. Or the "thoughtless" man, who finds it too much trouble to think at all. Or again the "blindly selfish" or the "brutally selfish" man, — the man who fails to note the fact of others in his world, the animal man whose perception of facts and relations is obtuse. To my mind these several equivalents and modifiers for the term "selfish" are highly instructive in showing us where the essence of the thing lies. No self-respecting man feels justified in expecting another to sacrifice his own good for him. For that matter, deliver me from the self-sacrificing man; the obligations incurred toward him I shall never be able to repay. But if he claims only to be intelligent, then I may very properly expect that, where the situation calls for it, he will include me in his plans. And what I condemn in the "selfish" man is not that he thinks of himself — if he thinks at all he must think of himself — but that he fails to take account of me.

As a matter of fact those persons who give you the most trouble in personal matters, and those who are least serviceable as members of society, are not those who



look out for number one but those who have no outlook whatever. The type of all such is the man who jolts you on the street. The man so intensely absorbed in his own ends as naïvely to disregard the possibility of other ends in his world; the man of easy good nature, "the creature of generous impulses," for whom anything of his is yours (and anything of yours is his); the sentimental man — or woman — whose ineptitudes are justified by the motive of self-devotion, and whose aim in life is to have his self-devotion appreciated, — all of these are essentially "selfish." And all are cases of lack of vision, and more or less of spiritual dulness. In other words, all selfishness is a manifestation of unintelligent animal impulse. And from a utilitarian standpoint there is really nothing to choose between naïve sensuality, naïve good-nature, and naïve indulgence in altruistic sentiment. Nor from a moral standpoint. For, remember, no impulse is more than an animal impulse so far as it is lacking thought.

Is there anything unlovely in this conception? I shall take up this question presently. But I think that even those who have a sentimental horror of the definitely self-regarding and calculating person, as "cold" and "unsympathetic" must at times appreciate the satisfaction of dealing with one who is "reasonably self-regarding." You cannot so readily borrow money from him, but more safely. He is not so likely to recall at two months money lent for three; or to represent as a personal favor a loan made on good security at fair interest; or again to cast into your teeth as an injustice a favor which he has voluntarily granted. All this is implied in that respect for himself, as a rational and free agent, which the attitude of intelligent calculation expresses. For my own part I prefer a thoughtfully self-regarding



man for all the purposes of life, — even as a possible benefactor in poverty and distress. He might not see his way to toss me his purse, like a hero of Alexander Dumas, but I should expect from him an intelligent sympathy and a genuine disposition to study my problem, to consider what I were still good for, and to secure for me that recognition which would enable me to live as a self-respecting, contributory member of society. And on any other ground have I a claim to his consideration? No doubt this would exclude a consideration of the incapables. But the absolutely incapable ought not to be considered. Yet it is a question whether any one in whom the light of intelligence still shines is ever absolutely incapable and may not under proper social arrangements still be worth while as a member of human society.

The philosophy of these lectures is thus a philosophy of self-assertion. But no doctrine of a blind and animal "will to power." Of will to power, certainly, — but of power through comprehensive intelligence, which in human society is the final source of power. What I stand for is not the senseless self-assertion of the glorified brute, or of the intoxicated genius, claiming a special and paradoxical exemption from ordinary responsibility, but the more definite, more determined, and more effective self-assertion of the clear-sighted, and therefore — as I hold — generous, man.



III Justice and Brotherly Love

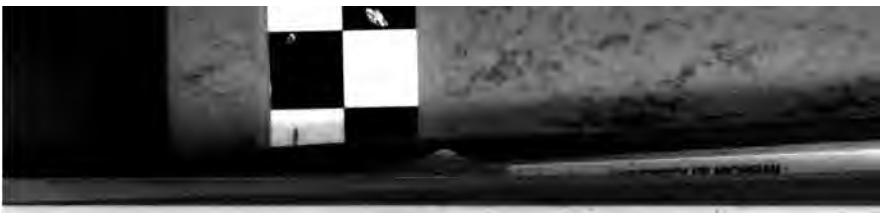
At this point we reach the question which was chiefly intended in the title of our Third Lecture, the question, namely, of the conceptual relations, the mutual implication or repugnance, of individuality and social unity. The question is, Can there be unity without individuality? And do we really aspire to such a unity, or judge it to be beautiful or morally ideal? For many of you this may be still an open question. For in spite of my best efforts I may not have succeeded in exhibiting the individualistic ideal as other than narrow and mean. And I have no doubt that by some the argument would be simply dismissed as an indication of spiritual blindness. You have given us, they would say, a fair enough account of the logic and point of view of the just man, who is faithful to his duty. But there is a higher motive than justice or even duty. Higher than duty is love. And in love we have an ideal of unity in which the demands of individuality are absolutely transcended and forgotten. This gives us a statement of our question: is the social ideal one of justice or of love? Or again, what is the relation of these conceptions? Can they be treated as mutually indifferent?

§ 101. I choose these conceptions as giving us the two expressions of the social ideal most prominent in our European thought. And as we shall see, they embody an important logical distinction. Roughly speaking, they may be said to have come to us from two distinct sources. The ideal of justice is inherited mainly from the Greeks, from whom, indeed, we have obtained most of the ideas that underlie our modern culture. On the other hand, the ideal of brotherly love has come to



us from the Jews, through the Christian Church. This does not mean that the Christian body of doctrine is as a whole an oriental product. Rather should it be said that a great part of the Christian theology is an appropriation of Greek philosophy. And many of those popular beliefs which seem to us characteristically "Christian," such as the belief in immortality, were, in much the same setting that they have for us today, an established possession of the earlier Greek thought. Yet the borrowing from the Greeks took place at a time when the Greek thought was itself strongly infected with oriental ideas. And in any case I think that the conception of brotherly love, with the point of view and feeling-attitude which it implies, may be regarded as a distinctively Christian product.

§ 102. As such it expresses a mental attitude typically oriental. That is to say, it aims, not to organize, but to dissolve all the differences created, on the one hand by economic conditions, and on the other hand by varieties of individual taste, interest, and opinion, into one all-absorbing unity of feeling. Or I may express the same thing by saying that it aims to conceive all the relations of men as intimately personal. Here, however, I use the term "personal" in its special and more popular sense. For even from our own point of view the ideal social relation is a personal relation. Yet for us this personal relation is the final coordination, in final distinctness, of individual interests. In the popular use of the term this element of distinctness is rather expressly ignored. "A personal matter," or "a matter of personal feeling" is something to be accepted and not to be further analyzed or understood; in like manner a personal relation is one to which the question of debit and credit no longer applies. It is in this sense that the Hebrew-



Christian conception of brotherly love interprets all the relations of men as intimately personal. The relation of man to man is that of brothers in a family; the relation of man and God is that of son and father. Hence, if a man sins, the gravity of the offense lies not in the actual injury done, but in his alienation from God and from his fellows. And the question of remedy is not a matter of repairing the injury but of securing forgiveness and reconciliation, — a reinstatement of the broken unity of feeling. When this is accomplished — and this alone — there remains no difference between the man who has done much harm and him who has done little. For that matter the sinner who repents stands in a closer relation to God than the ninety and nine who need no repentance. Such is the attitude of God toward man, and such also should be our own attitude toward our fellows. In the matter of our social relations the one all-important end is to secure a unity of feeling. It makes no difference whether I am in my neighbor's debt or he owes me. Rather, the more he owes me the more I am bound to forgive. The more he demands the more I am bound to sacrifice. If he takes my coat I shall offer him my cloak. If he smites me on the right cheek I shall turn the left. In a word, the common brotherhood demands an absolute self-sacrifice and an absolute self-effacement of the individual man; and we shall only then have reached the ideal of unity when all distinctions of individuality have utterly vanished.

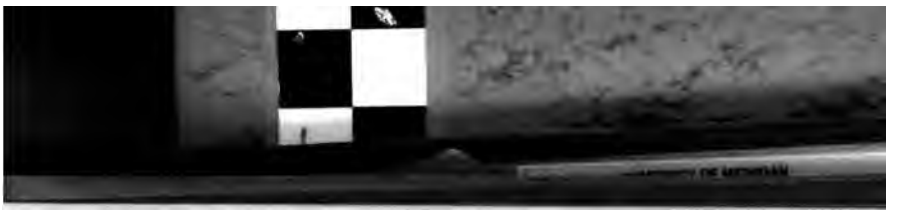
§ 103. To this conception of the social ideal the Greek conception offers a marked contrast. The oriental seeks a unity of feeling; his motive is esthetic and emotional. In the thought of the Greeks the one motive that is ever dominant and conspicuous, the motive that characterizes their literature, their art, and their religion, as well as



their philosophy, is the intellectual. "The love of knowledge, says Plato, is as marked a characteristic of the Greeks as is the love of money of the Phœnicians and Egyptians. From the dawn of history *to know* seemed to the Greeks to be in itself a good thing apart from all results."[23] Yet not to know coldly, as we shall see, — for the Greek mind the intellectual verities were not the pale abstractions they often seem to us — but clearly. What the Greek sought was to live in the, to him, warm light of clear knowledge, to realize in both his life and his thought that perfect fineness and definiteness of outline which we find in the landscape on a bright, clear day.

This love of clear vision is quite alien to the oriental mind; and equally so to the Christian mind, so far as it is imbued with the spirit of primitive and pure Christianity. It is true that the Church has at various times encouraged the pursuit of learning; but for Christian feeling knowledge has figured always as a suspicious and dangerous possession. It was the tree of knowledge that corrupted our first ancestors. And to the devout Christian there seems to be a certain impiety in seeking to penetrate the secrets of nature, — at least its deeper secrets; for this is to demand from God a knowledge that He has not seen fit to reveal. It is felt, moreover, that knowledge offers temptations to worldliness and pride. So far as it teaches a man to rely upon himself it discourages the feeling of dependence upon God. And Christian ministers are constantly pointing the contrast between the Christian poverty of spirit and the self-righteousness of worldly wisdom. True wisdom is a matter, not of knowledge, but of divine inspiration; and therefore the most uninstructed of men in the wisdom

[23] Butcher's *Harvard Lectures.*



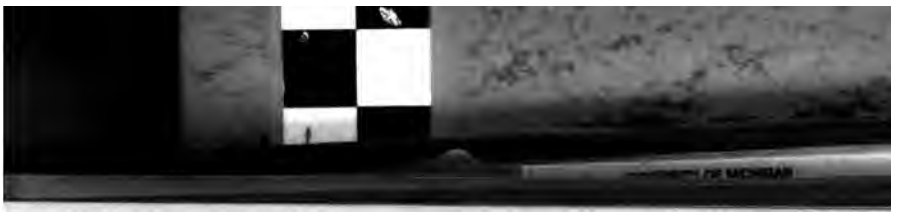
of the world may be the highest authority in matters of holiness and virtue. Indeed one cannot rightly grasp the secrets of God until one has discarded as mere dross all merely human knowledge.

For the Greek thought this so-called human knowledge was the clearest possible authority. And the most characteristic feature of the Greek ethics — in spite of the exceptions taken by Aristotle — was the Socratic doctrine that for the attainment of virtue knowledge alone is sufficient. To Socrates it seemed inconceivable that the man who knows, and who has therefore a clear perception of the difference between the better and the worse, should fail to choose the better. And if knowledge is the basis of virtue generally it is the basis of social virtue. But to know is to analyze and distinguish, not only object from object, but object from subject. And one who distinguishes his relations to his different neighbors can no longer act as if he stood in the same relation to all. Nor can he fail to take account of himself as a universal factor in these various relations. His social ideal will then be one of adjustment, of an adjustment determined in each case by actual facts and conditions, — not a love which ignores, but a discerning justice, not self-sacrifice, but a rightly proportioned self-assertion. In other words, the social ideal is a question, in the large sense, of debit and credit. And so we have this difference: where the oriental stands for humility and self-sacrifice, the Greek stands for self-assertion and self-respect; and where the oriental teaches brotherly love, the Greek teaches social justice. Thus the Greek conception of society involves a clear recognition of individual differences and individual rights.

In speaking of the Greek conception I am thinking of course mainly of the period of Socrates, Plato, and



Aristotle. Yet even here it may seem that our theory of the essential individualism of the Greek conception is contradicted by the partial communism taught in Plato's "Republic." But I think that we may treat this feature as more or less accidental. Not only does Aristotle condemn the notion, upon grounds singularly modern and familiar, it is quite out of relation with the fundamental idea of the "Republic" itself. For the avowed purpose of the "Republic" is to analyze the meaning of justice. For Plato justice consists in a due and proportionate consideration of the several values in question. In the individual life it consists in awarding a proper measure of satisfaction to the several elements of our nature, the sensuous desires, the noble desires, and the reason. And the just state is only the just individual "written large." In the state the three elements of human nature, sensuous, high-minded, and rational, are represented by the respective classes of artisans, warriors, and philosophers. Justice consists, then, in a constitutional classification of citizens under which each will hold the position which his nature demands. And in an ideally just state there will be perfect happiness for all. Accordingly, when Plato prescribes a community of property and of wives for his upper class of warriors and philosophers, he does not conceive that he is demanding of them any serious "self-sacrifice for the common good." Rather is he depriving them, though for the common good, of that which, for men of their kind, is of the least personal importance, or for that matter, from the standpoint of their real interests, a positive nuisance. In this he is no doubt mistaken, and his argument is forced. It remains none the less true that the meaning of the "Republic" is essentially individualistic.



§ 104. We have seen that the Christian ideal is intimately personal. In the same sense it may be said that the tendency of the Greek is to be rather impersonal. That is to say, not in the sense of "disinterested," but in the "distant" sense of impersonal in which we distinguish a personal from a business relation. The relation of man to man as such was for the Greeks not so intimate a relation as it is for Christianity. For Christianity the typical social group is the family, and the typical social relation is that of brotherhood. We are even more absolutely one in essence than as brothers by blood we can ever be. For the Greeks the typical social group was the state, not the imperial state of Rome or modern Germany or Britain, but the peculiar city-state of Athens and Sparta, in which the term "citizen" stood for a rather neighborly relation. The typical social relation was therefore somewhat less intimate than the fraternal relation but much more intimate than the relation implied, say, in American citizenship. It might be approximately indicated by the sort of relation which exists between members of a voluntary association or a neighborhood club. If we develop the conception of social organization which is given only in outline by Plato we might perhaps transform his lower order into an association for industrial cooperation. His upper classes would then constitute "the army" (as this phrase is understood in Europe) and a parliament of gentlemen. The relations of men in these upper classes would be marked by perfect kindliness and courtesy, by mutual consideration, and by a mutual appreciation amounting in many cases to a warm personal sympathy. But in all this no one ever forgets himself or fails to remember what is due individually to himself and his fellows. That is to say, in the most intimate of personal



relations he never loses his own personality in that of his fellows.

Such, then, are the two more prominent conceptions of social unity to be found in our modern culture, — on the one hand the Hebrew-Christian conception of society as a family, on the other hand the Greek conception of society as an association or club. Now it is very interesting to note that, while we set both ideals before us, we hold them more or less apart. Consider, for example, the attitude of the typical citizen of a small American community. He goes to church on Sunday and learns the lessons of humility, self-sacrifice, and brotherly love. And there can be no doubt that for the time being he is sincere. But by Monday he has no intention either of turning the left cheek, or of selling all his goods for the benefit of the poor, or of sacrificing his family in the larger interests of society. Nor does he think that he *ought* to do these things. In fact, when he comes to the point, he is certain that he ought *not*. Nor, when business-hours are over, does he resume the Christian ideal as a guide for general social intercourse. His offer or acceptance of an invitation to dinner is determined strictly by his relations to the individuals in question, to some degree on the basis of debit and credit. At most it is in his family life where the Christian ideals are frankly accepted, or in the administration of charity, — though even here he does not, in these days of scientific charity, neglect the considerations of utility and personal desert.

I state this as an interesting fact. Having made the same statement in another connection I was surprised to find it interpreted as a charge of hypocrisy against those professing Christian principles. Such, however, is far from my meaning. To me the interest of the fact



lies in this: that in spite of the centuries of dominance exercised by the Church, in spite of the fact that the term "Christendom" is used to distinguish our European civilization, and the term "Christian" to distinguish our European moral ideals, the conceptions which guide our practical working life, and our estimation of values, intellectual and moral, are still essentially Greek. From the Greeks we have inherited, not only our science, but our more deliberate moral ideals.

§ 105. Now the whole purpose of these lectures is to justify and develop this Greek point of view. Their fundamental thesis is the Socratic doctrine that virtue is knowledge. Yet it is not my aim to show that brotherly love is a mere illusion. Such an extreme view would, indeed, be forbidden by my own principles; for it would amount to setting aside as quite meaningless and unworthy of consideration an expression of the social ideal which has been preferred by a large part of the race. Nor, on the other hand, have I any intention of exalting the special features of the ancient Greek ideal. To my mind, for example, Aristotle's picture of the high-minded, or magnanimous man — a favorite object, by the way, of Christian criticism — represents a noble ethical ideal. Yet it would be strange if, for us of today, the picture were without blemish. Its blemishes, however, are such from the standpoint of magnanimity itself. To decline to accept a favor from a friend, to insist always that the balance of obligation be on the other side, these are evidences not of an exalted magnanimity, but of a certain lack of it. It is also a rather poor sort of greatness which demands for its satisfaction an environment of inferior minds. Such an attitude argues, indeed, a certain distrust of self. The test of a genuine magnanimity, of an assured belief in self, is to be able rather to accept



a favor gracefully, and to make a generous acknowledgment of obligation, without admission of inferiority or loss of self-respect.

We may then express the relations of love and justice in the following form. We shall say, first, that brotherly love is indeed our social ideal, not, however, as the antithesis of justice, but only as its final fulfilment. In other words, love is the final perfection and refinement of the distributive relation. It is the relation which exists between men who have reached an understanding which embraces not only their business or professional interests, not only their interests in art, or science, or sport, or politics, or social improvement, but together with these, as involved in them all, those interests which for each are most personal and intimate. And thus, on the other hand, we shall say that justice is the substance and structure of love. It is therefore true that love is a personal relation, and that justice, so far as it has not reached the refinement of love, is relatively impersonal. But the personal interests include in their last analysis all the impersonal. The personality of a man, so far as he is in truth a person, expresses itself in all the departments of his life. A personal sympathy for him which fails to express itself in a practical adjustment with any of his various aims is therefore, so far, meaningless. And a social relation is equally meaningless if it fails to express itself in a mutual adjustment, which takes account of individual services and their several relations, including those of debit and credit. And therefore we shall say that love without justice is so far an unmeaning conception. Genuine love presupposes that justice is satisfied.

It is here that I take issue with the special doctrine of love represented in the Christian religion. In the



Christian teaching the feeling is its own justification. It is not to be analyzed or to look for justification on any external grounds. As man is justified to God by his faith, so is he to be justified to his fellow-man by his love, or, as the case may be, by his sorrow and contrition. Considerations of debit and credit, or of guarantee for future payment or good behavior, are not to enter the question. According to my view, every feeling must seek its justification in facts. I do not say that brotherly feeling is not to be cultivated, certainly not that generous instincts are to be accounted a vice. Nor do I say that love must be based *upon* calculation, and kept in absolute restraint until calculation is complete. In the nature of the case it must be that the appreciation of unity will be often in advance of the clear grounds for it, and for our human consciousness never finally accounted for on a perfectly rational basis. What I do say is this, that every feeling of love must seek, and constantly seek, its justification on clear, rational grounds. Any feeling that refuses the test is so far an evasion; and any feeling that is unable to meet the test is so far an illusion.

§ 106. This idea of the relationship is nothing original or new. It is even commonplace. But this commonplace conception of the relation of love and justice contains implications of a wider philosophical import, which it will be worth our while to consider. For in the original opposition of these ideas you will have discerned, no doubt, first, the contrast between a mystical and a realistic view of things, secondly, the contrast between an esthetic attitude and an attitude strictly practical and scientific, — in other words, intellectualistic. It is therefore to our purpose to inquire into the meaning of the values represented by these contrasted sets of conceptions.



The Christian conception of brotherly love is, I say, a mystical conception. The Church itself recognizes this in declaring that the Church, or the brotherly unity, is the mystical body of Christ. But mysticism, as we learn from Professor Royce, is not merely a general term for what is vague. It is the expression of a rather well-defined principle, namely, that the real is what is grasped immediately, in direct experience. Thus the reality of color or tone is the pure sensation, untouched by discriminating analysis; the reality of love is the pure feeling. Now, as we shall see, the real is likewise for us the immediate. But it is also more; it is the immediate made transparent by thought.[24] To the oriental mind, however, of which the mystical philosophy is chiefly typical, thought, in our sense, is theoretically vicious. For — to the oriental mind — thought does nothing but introduce distinctions and differences. And in the world of distinctions everything is what it is because it is not something else. Red is red because it is not blue. In the social world the distinction is of *meum* and *tuum*. I am poor because you are rich. These differences are introduced by the institution of property, upon which, in some sort, all distinctions of individuality ultimately rest. Hence, to the mystical mind the whole world of thought, and of experience so far as it is mixed with thought, is infected with negation. As such it is not a real world, but a world of mere appearance, — an illusion. How, then, shall we penetrate to the real? The mystic's answer is: go back to the immediate feeling. Abandon the illusions of thought, deny its distinctions and negations. Abolish the institution of property, and remove every possible ground for individual self-assertion. Forgive all your debtors; wipe the slate clean;

[24] See § 120.



and treat all men simply as brothers in love. And so, for our special purposes we may say that the mystic is the man who finds reality in the absence of distinctions.

§ 107. Thus the outcome of mysticism is communism. The mystical unity-without-difference demands for its logical realization, not only a community of property, but of wives, of children, in fact of all aims and ambitions which could possibly distinguish, and thus separate, man and man. And on the other hand I may point out that every communistic theory of society rests upon ultimately mystical grounds. The Christian conception is in its intent distinctly communistic. Primitive Christianity was such; and every return to "pure Christianity" has shown a similar tendency, including at times the community of women, or at least the abstention from sexual relations, which, logically and sincerely, is implied in the mystical ideal. Similarly, the whole attitude of Christianity toward the world has been, in theory at least, consistently mystical and oriental. In spite of the struggle of Church and of Churchmen for wealth and power, "pure religion" has always been understood to involve a certain contempt for the world, a treatment of the things of here and now as mere appearance, or not-being.

From mysticism to modern socialism seems a far cry. And indeed I hesitate to introduce the term "socialism" into the discussion at all, first because of a limited knowledge of the literature of scientific socialism, secondly because, as I think most persons would admit, it is difficult to find any two socialists who attach the same extension of meaning to the term. There seem to be all grades of socialists, from those who stand for a revolutionary reorganization of the social order to those who advocate a rather modest degree of state-supervision;



and for the stupidly conservative every one is a "socialist" who believes in any measure of social reform. Yet I think I may venture to say that the mystical element which characterizes the communistic theory is present in greater or less degree in nearly all, if not all, forms of socialism. And it is this mystical element, this assertion of an opaque "common good," which still differentiates socialism from individualism. Present-day socialism does not, like communism, stand for a community of goods,—that is, of consumption goods. But it makes a distinction between the goods of consumption and the goods used in production. The state may then freely leave to each individual the consumption and enjoyment of the necessaries or luxuries once rightfully his own; here the distinction of property is to remain in full force; but it will strictly control the use of goods used in production, or perhaps take entire charge of them, to make sure that the productive forces of nature and of society are utilized for the common good. In this denial of individual rights in the instruments of production, or of individual freedom in productive activities, we have, I think, a distinct survival of communism, which, again, is an expression of the mystical motive.

How is the individual to be induced to regulate his productive activities for the good of all? Well, partly, no doubt, by a set of institutions which will offer him on the one hand positive encouragement, and on the other hand will prescribe penalties for the exploitation of productive conditions for private ends. So far, indeed, the conception is not mystical. But so far the scheme of socialism differs not a whit in idea from the individualism advocated by Bentham. Whether social welfare is to be secured through state-enterprise or private enterprise is a matter of detail; but if we are



to rely upon "sanctions," then it must be said that no sanctions would be finally effective in calling forth individual interest and energy which failed to offer the fullest satisfaction to individual aims; and a socialism which rested upon these motives would also be an individualism. While these motives may be accepted by many socialists as expressing the logic of their view, they are by no means the kind upon which socialism chiefly depends. The more common idea, I should say, is that human energy will necessarily be turned into social channels if the opportunity for exploitation be withdrawn. For human energies are essentially disinterested. The really propulsive motive is "the instinct of workmanship." That this should develop into a system of exploitation for private ends is an accident of present social conditions. Change the conditions, remove the opportunity, and men will work cheerfully for the common good. Here, then, I say that the logic of socialism is mystical. The assumption upon which it rests is that the absence of competition is harmony, the absence of self-seeking a single-eyed devotion to the common good.

§ 108. It is rather difficult to deal with mysticism on logical grounds; for the mystic has renounced logic. All that we can do is to follow his directions for the quest of reality and ask ourselves where we come out. Professor Royce has applied this method to the mystical conception of being and finds that the result is—nothing. A distinctionless being is simply no being whatever. Just the same is true of social being. The absence of individual distinctions is not unity. It is simply no social fact whatever.

The communist (as I may style all the representatives of this point of view) points out that the greatest difficulties with which our social problems are concerned,



are connected with the institution of property. This institution is involved, more or less nearly or remotely, in every question of personal rights. He thinks, therefore, that by abolishing property, and removing the chief ground of strife and discord, he will attain a unity. But, in the first place, from the fact that all social problems are connected with the ownership of property it by no means follows that property is the *cause* of discord. Rather is it the *expression* of a difference which lies deep within the nature of the individuals themselves, which is bound to persist as a difference, and will persist as a discord, under any external conditions, as long as individual self-assertion is blind and uncontrolled by reason. But let us assume that the communist is right, and that the abolition of property would remove the cause of discord and injustice; what would then be the result? Clearly, not brotherly love, but a condition of mutual indifference. For it must be remembered always that personal regard presupposes as its elementary condition a freedom of action on the part of its object. I do not love my fellow because the external conditions hinder him from treating me unjustly, or offer him no inducement, but because, in the face of such an inducement, he chooses to treat me justly. The abolition of property might then, indeed, remove the ground of discord; it would at the same time remove the ground for any personal feeling whatever. My fellow-man would cease to be an interesting object. And in ceasing to be an interesting object, he would also, according to all psychological analogies, cease to be any object whatever. In a word, that keen and lively consciousness of themselves and of each other which now distinguishes the race of men from those of animals and the higher races of men from the lower, — all this would vanish and at


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

best there would remain only the relatively automatic coordination of individual movements which marks the gregarious animals and to some degree the primitive clan-stage of human culture.

The same argument applies to the mystical unity of productive energy. The socialist, noting the waste both of human energy and of natural resources under our system of free competition, the restriction of opportunity to the stronger, and the exploitation by the stronger of the weaker, aims to cure these evils by forbidding free competition and forcing the stream of productive activity into the channel of the common good. But it does not follow that the absence of competition would be a productive unity. Here again the absence of difference may be simply *in*difference. The absence of struggle may be, not love, but death. That this may be the result is amply suggested by the indifference which now pervades our public service as contrasted with private enterprise. The question is how these self-regarding activities are to be kept still active though no longer self-regarding. And the question contains its own answer. The nature of man is not to be changed by act of parliament, — except so far as the act of parliament furnishes a free and rational expression for the nature of man. But no act of parliament can, merely as such, make the irrational rational. And it seems to me that any one who expects to convert a group of blindly self-regarding agents into a social unity by the force of law, the force of the law depending upon the will of the agents in question, is attempting the old feat of raising oneself by one's boot-straps. If there is to be any new force for social unity it must come whence all social forces come, from an intelligent analysis of individual interests and a scientific discovery and invention of



methods of coordination. If the self-regarding energies which now do, as a matter of fact, keep the social organism alive, are to be made socially more effective, if these energies are to be, not simply extinguished, but utilized, it can never be by a social order which merely restricts their scope of operation, but only by a scientific coordination which, in studying individual interests, and adjusting interest to interest, offers a more intelligent inducement to self-regard, makes a more intelligent demand upon the individual and gives him, as a productive agent, an even greater liberty than he has at present.

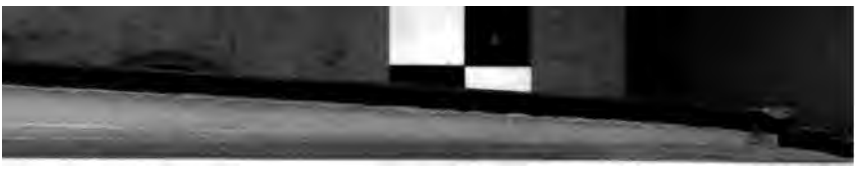
§ 109. This will make the social problem a very difficult one; but the very difficulty will help to explain what I mean by saying that communism, socialism, and the Christian conception of brotherly love are all in various degrees the expression of a mystical tendency of thought. For the essence of the mystical tendency is to be appalled by intellectual difficulty; and then to treat a baffling complexity of demands and conditions as an evidence of meaningless unreality. The mystical attitude is that of the man who, overwhelmed by the complexities of civilized life, sighs for primitive simplicity and thinks to find there true satisfaction and peace. For the mystic the individualism of our modern life is so much vain strife; and true satisfaction is to be found only in the state of love and mutual helpfulness which comes through self-renunciation. But here he is the victim of an illusion. The absence of self-seeking would be, not love and helpfulness, but indifference and the cessation of activity, a general lowering of the meaning and reality of life. The social problem is not a problem of renunciation, voluntary or enforced,—renunciation, indeed, presents no problem. It is the problem rather of adjusting individual interests in mutual satis-



faction and freedom. That these interests are the outcome of a "social" process of comparison makes no difference. Once defined they are facts, and like other facts they are not to be evaded or renounced, but only to be satisfied.

The history of civilization records the development of a constantly increasing complexity of such facts, of a constantly more marked difference, and a constantly more comprehensive and freer adjustment. Our modern individualism is no temporary aberration, no merely preparatory stage to a final state of self-effacing communism. It represents a positive attainment in the direction of the higher culture. The institution of free competition is itself the mark of a higher state of civilization, and consequently of a more comprehensive unity of individual interests. It marks a state in which as compared with slavery or feudalism, a man's contribution to the social good is the expression of his own free will, — free in the only sense in which his will can here be free, as finding in the satisfaction of the demands of society a profit for himself. It must not be forgotten that competition, however destructive, is still in its own degree constructive. And I think we may say that the competitive *régime* is not only freer but socially more productive than any that has existed before. Any still higher unity must then, not efface, but fully satisfy the motives represented in the present institution. Only on these conditions will it be a real unity, and only thus will love be a reality, — that is to say, only so far as the harmony of interests is expressed, not merely in feeling, but in the economic constitution of the social order.

§ 110. When we set up brotherly love as our ideal of the social relation what we have in mind is the real unity which as a rule characterizes the family relation as



distinct from the separateness of men in their business relations. We then make the family relation our ideal for the organization of society as a whole. And so far we are right enough. But we should not undertake to make this extension of the family idea without analyzing the conditions upon which the unity of the family rests. The family life of intelligent people is very far from a state of common self-effacement. The ideal family presupposes a nice distinction of individual rights, responsibilities, and duties, in the fulfilment of which there is mutual self-respect. The agitation for the emancipation of women, so-called, is, in part at least, an expression of this very ideal. It is by no means hostile to the family unity, but aims rather to make the unity of the family a richer and more positively social fact. And upon the positive character of this fact, upon the significance of the individuals in the family, the respect accorded to individual rights, and the fineness and intelligence of the social adjustment, — upon this will depend, not only its economic effectiveness, but its humanizing influence as a stimulant of higher sympathies and appreciations. The rights of the individual in the family are no doubt very different from those defined by law. The father who in early and middle life makes heavy sacrifices for the education of his sons is not necessarily expecting them to support him in his old age. He is thinking rather of seeing them well established in an honorable position. But at the same time he is thinking of himself as their parent, recognized as such in their affection and respect, and enjoying, through this social relation, the fruits of his investment. He may suspect that his anticipations are pitched rather high. None the less they furnish, as assumptions, the ground and justification — the necessary justification — of his action.


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Could he definitely foresee himself in the position of a parent disowned and despised, his interest would be gone, his efforts would be paralyzed, and his love would be utterly dissipated. For not even can parental affection survive the destruction of the illusion that affection will be cherished in return. In the family as elsewhere there can be no real love which is not at least conceived to be a reciprocal relation.

So far, then, from regarding the family as a place of general self-effacement, we should expect it rather to be the place where the individual is to enjoy the fullest self-expression and freedom. The family is the one place where we expect to air our opinions of men and of things without fear of misunderstanding. It is the one place where, if at all, we tolerate any analysis or criticism of the more intimate aspects of our personal character. On the other hand, it is the one place where we recognize the right of others to disregard the conventional rules and to impose upon us a consideration of their personal peculiarities. In a word, it is the place of all places where by common consent each may be most freely and completely himself.

What, then, are the conditions upon which this family unity rests? When we analyze the situation more closely we find that, so far as the unity is genuine and not a merely sentimental or hypocritical appearance, it is no mere unity of feeling but at the same time of concrete fact. That is to say, it is a unity of actual adaptation based upon an actual mutual understanding. And when we look further we find that for mutual understanding the conditions are peculiarly favorable. There is, in the first place, as a rule, the inheritance of common tastes from common ancestors, which is suggested in the saying that blood is thicker than water. Yet we should



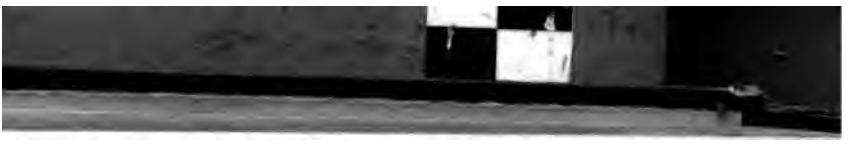
not attach too much importance to this condition in itself. Community of taste serves no doubt, in a mechanical fashion, to fix the scope of family activities within a certain definite field, and thus in some degree to narrow the range of the problem of coordination. But consciousness of kind, to use Professor Giddings' phrase, will not of itself constitute a social relation. Or rather we should say that the consciousness of kind cannot, as consciousness, be keener than the consciousness of difference. And in the family the coordination of differences is facilitated by another condition which quite frequently makes water thicker than blood, the condition, namely, of constant and intimate association.

This is the really important factor in the explanation of the superior force of family ties; and to the extent that the condition prevails, it leads to a similar result in circles beyond the family. Yet of the distinctively social relation it is the condition rather than the cause. Mere association may result in habituation, but this is a very different thing from understanding, or love. Love is the conscious mutual adjustment of self-conscious agents. And the importance of the factor of close association lies in the fact that the close association of self-conscious agents is bound, so far as they are conscious, to result in a mutual consciousness and — necessarily — a mutual adjustment. And this is the finally important point: the love which at its best, *i.e.*, among persons of developed character and mind, characterizes the relations of the family circle, is real because it stands, not for a mere feeling, but also for a practical understanding and adjustment.

§ 111. The situation is very different when we step beyond the smaller circle of family and friends into the larger field of society and the state. Here the conditions



that facilitate mutual understanding and sympathy in the smaller circle are largely wanting. The space and time conditions of general social intercourse, the limitations of attention in the individual man, the expenditure of nervous force required for keeping up a wide acquaintance, — all of these conspire to restrict the active interests of the individual to a relatively small number of his fellows and to reduce to a rather low degree the element of personal sympathy in society at large. The limits of sympathy are not rigidly fixed. For the conscious agent no limits are ultimately fixed. But in any case *the fraternal relation is here a problem rather than a fact.* That is to say, brotherly love is not an actual social condition, not even in any clear sense an actual psychological condition, but an unrealized, and still far from realized, social ideal. And here as elsewhere the confusion of the ideal and the real results on the one hand in sentimentalism, more or less conventional or emotional as the case may be, and on the other hand in obscuring the real nature of the problem. There can be no real social unity which does not stand for an actual interweaving of individual interests, no real social sympathy which does not stand for an intelligent comprehension of these interests. The problem of capital and labor, for example, is not proximately a question of love but of the personal motives and economic conditions for which these terms severally stand. And when I hear a pastor proclaiming that he loves every member of a rather large flock, I, at least, am led, not so much to doubt his sincerity, as to wonder whether he has so studied the meaning of love as to appreciate the tremendous responsibilities which his assertion involves. Love may be quite real within a relatively narrow circle. And toward our fellow-men in the world at large we may



cultivate an attitude of open-mindedness and good will. We may, and ought, to find a generous pleasure in every enlargement of our sympathies. But to claim that we love our fellow-man, simply as our fellow-man, is to assert a measure of actual sympathy and comprehension which is absurdly far from real.

§ 112. A social situation in which mutual understanding were universally complete, and brotherly sympathy universally diffused, would imply that all the physical conditions which separate man and man, and create a hostility of interests, had been finally mastered. It would then be a society, no longer of men, but of gods. This conception marks, no doubt, the direction of our social ideal. From a social point of view, our struggle to overcome our environment is a struggle to break down the barriers that divide us and to enrich our individual lives with a sympathetic exchange of personal thought and experience. And this is the direction in which we have come along the path of social evolution. The history of civilization is the history of the process by which men have learned to know each other. And in learning to know each other they have learned to think differently of each other and to find in each other, not enemies, but sympathetic and helpful friends. But this result is not the outcome of any mere feeling or hypothesis of unity, — of any original consciousness of kind. Rather should we say that in the early stages of culture such unity was, in the larger sense, as between tribe and tribe, neither discoverable nor real. For where two tribes find themselves in a region which, in the existent state of knowledge, will not support more than one, the unity of interests must be regarded as altogether meaningless. The progress toward real unity has come about through what we should now call a scientific study of facts and

conditions. The development of agriculture and the mechanical arts, and the application of the latter to the purposes of communication, has made the world larger as a source of supply, smaller as a barrier to social intercourse. Literature and the fine arts have brought men on their finer and more personal side into sympathetic relations with their otherwise remote and distant neighbors. And the study of law, of ethics, of economic and social conditions, has enabled men to live together in large cooperative bodies. In a word, then, it is through the scientific study of actual conditions that the narrowness of the individual in the world at large has been overcome and his sympathies enlarged, and it is through this that the life of the race has become, so far as it has become so, a positive and real unity.

§ 113. This scientific organization of society is justice. And this will explain how justice is love become real. As long as physical conditions present a flat contradiction between the interests of nation and nation, capital and labor, producer and consumer, it is nonsense to speak of love except as a practical problem. Love is the conscious realization of adjustments made. This is what it must mean in the larger relations of life; it is what it does mean in the more intimate relations so far as love is real. Mr. Hardy has expressed the idea very beautifully in his "Far from the Madding Crowd." You have no doubt read of that prosaic courtship of Bathsheba Everdene by Gabriel Oak, her longtime steward and man of business.

"Theirs was that substantial affection which arises, if any arises at all, when the two who are thrown together begin first by knowing the rougher sides of each other's character, and not the best till further on; the romance growing up in the interstices of a mass of hard prosaic reality. This good fellowship, *camara-*



derie, usually occurring through similarity of pursuits, is unfortunately seldom superadded to love between the sexes, because men and women associate not in their labors but in their pleasures merely. Where, however, happy circumstances permit its development, the compounded feeling proves itself to be the only love which is strong as death; the love which many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown; beside which the passion usually called by the name is as evanescent as steam."

And why evanescent? Because the feeling has no positive content. There is, so to speak, nothing to love about; no concrete organization of the married life. And this, I think, should be a matter of thought for those who, at the close of courtship and honeymoon, find that sentiment begins to pall. For even here, in its most typical expression, love is a problem to be solved. The marriage ceremony is mostly a contract for future delivery, a mutual promise to pay, which is to be justified by the sympathies effected through the concrete issues of associated life.

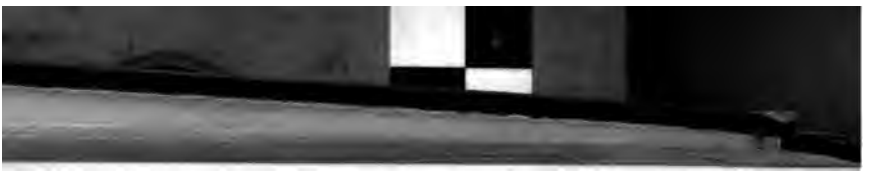
For the Christian conception of love these adjustments are irrelevant, either as basis or conclusion. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you." And though your enemy has attacked you, not seven times, but seventy times seven, overlook it. But facts are not to be overlooked. From any but a mystical standpoint the love that a man cherishes toward his enemies is a formal illusion, a state of mind incompatible with a clear perception of the hostile relations. Real love implies a meeting of minds, a sympathetic reciprocity of regard. If this condition be ignored nothing is implied even in love for your friends. Yet no dictate of justice permits one to be unforgiving, if the conditions of forgiveness are fulfilled. And justice and love are at one in holding that a man should seek to convert his


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

enemies into friends. It may be claimed that this is all that the command to love our enemies enjoins; and that the mystical denial of any limitations to love means only what I have myself asserted, namely, that the possibilities of harmonious adjustment are theoretically unlimited between conscious beings. In this sense, of course, I can subscribe to the Christian doctrine; only, not on mystical grounds, but on the ground of the practical efficiency of consciousness. But this interpretation of Christianity would, I think, involve a radical change in Christian teaching and a very different attitude toward scientific knowledge.

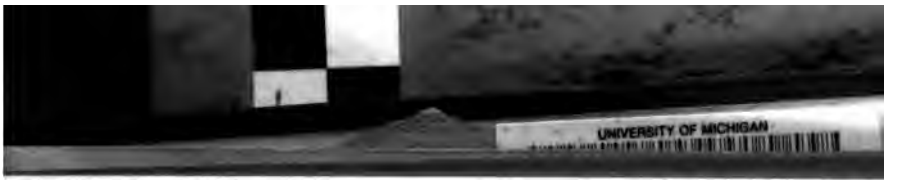
§ 114. This brings us to the second aspect of the contrast between love and justice, the contrast between estheticism and intellectualism, — beauty *versus* utility, art *versus* science. This second contrast is more or less a repetition of the first with a change of terms; the change of terms expresses, however, the view of the problem taken by a different class of persons. Under the first aspect we have seen that there is no conflict in idea between love and justice except so far as love is a mere negation. We shall see the same to be true under the second aspect. The scientific ideal is not merely scientific; it is itself the expression of a deeper esthetic need. And there is no conflict between the esthetic and the practical ideal except as you dwell upon the intuitive, the relatively unrational and unconscious aspect of esthetic appreciation, and make that the essence of the superiority of beauty to utility.

§ 115. What is the difference between beauty and utility? This is indeed a large question to be introduced at this stage of our discussion. But in any case I think you will agree with me in holding that beauty, if it be true beauty, stands for a finer good, and at the same time

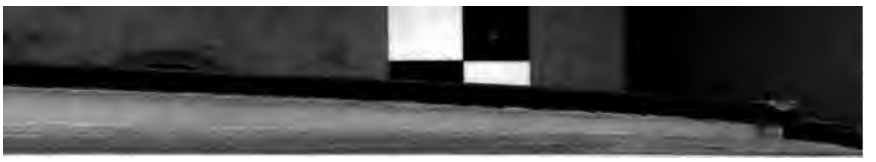


for a good that is more comprehensive and concrete. It may appear at first somewhat strange to distinguish beauty as a concrete good; we are accustomed rather to give this name to the utilities. The point is that the beautiful object as compared with the useful is more completely and comprehensively satisfying. A coat is useful in being, say, durable and warm. It is beautiful if it fits well and if it be in other respects just the coat that you ought to wear, the coat that precisely expresses the kind of man you are. But, after all, you rarely put much of yourself into your coat. As an expression of taste it is relatively partial, occasional, and unpremeditated, and he who scoffs at it barely touches *you*. It is another matter when a man speaks slightingly of your friends or your special admirations in art or letters. Here he touches you at all points at once. For these are supposed to embody your most deliberate choice; and in standing for them you reveal to the world what kind of man you are, your general theory of life, — in other words, what for you is most deeply and comprehensively satisfying. Now these deeper needs are the esthetic needs, and the objects that satisfy them are not merely good, but beautiful. It is in this sense that I call beauty a more comprehensive as well as a finer good. The useful object satisfies a special need, abstracted more or less from other needs. The beautiful is more nearly an expression of the whole self.

§ 116. But there is another aspect to the relation. The more comprehensive the purpose to be fulfilled, the finer the adjustments required, the further we shall be from stating the meaning of the purpose, and the conditions of fulfilment, with analytic precision, — in other words, in scientific form. And so it happens that art is a matter of appreciation — of feeling, or intuition


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

— while science is a matter of knowledge. Both are forms of consciousness, and each has its advantages and disadvantages. The sense of beauty, if it be true, represents a more concrete grasp of things, a finer comprehension of their more remote and subtle differences; on the other hand its results are correspondingly opaque, as regards meaning, and incommunicable. Scientific knowledge is readily communicable; if your scientific explanation is sufficiently clear you may even compel others to accept it; on the other hand, the clearer it is, the more likely it is to be abstract. Take, for example, the science of man. That no such science exists is an illustration of our point. The physicist deals with man, but only, say, as an illustration of the law of gravitation when he falls upon the ice. For the chemist he is a mass of molecular change; for the biologist and anthropologist he is an organism admirably adapted to preserve its kind; for the economist a buyer and seller; and for the psychologist a being that knows what it is doing. Each of these sciences presents a relatively clear view of the man, yet a view more or less abstract, a certain aspect of the man considered apart from his other aspects. Nowhere in science can you obtain a view of the concrete man, the personal individual who is the unity of these several aspects. This is the aim of art. Yet the object presented by art is never a systematic unity of clearly analyzed aspects. When Thackeray introduces you to Pendennis his chief aim is to give you a concrete picture of the man. He reproduces his conversation, portrays his personal appearance and manner, tells you of his career, of his characteristic vanities and generous enthusiasms, — all that, if possible, you may enjoy the same sort of personal acquaintance as the author himself. Of course he assumes that Pendennis

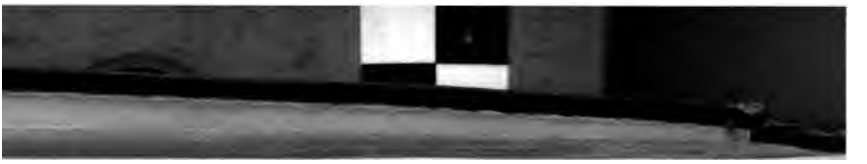


is a consistently personal character. But he makes no attempt at analytic demonstration. This must be for you, as for him, a matter of appreciation. Such, then, is the peculiarity of esthetic appreciation. The sense of beauty stands for both a finer and a more comprehensive grasp of things and relations than our clear perception of facts. It is, however, by comparison a relatively unconscious process, a vague and obscure feeling rather than definitely self-conscious knowledge.

§ 117. You will see the application of this to our social relations. Those who have an eye exclusively to the superiorities of feeling and intuition will claim that the finer aspects of social unity are not a matter of knowledge; that the feeling of unity penetrates further than a calculation of mutual advantage; and therefore that love is superior to justice. And to a certain extent they are right. No human being can expect to live exclusively by mathematical calculation. A man who should defer a proposal of marriage until the advantages and disadvantages of the union could be precisely tabulated would obviously never propose. So, again, a man who refuses to do business except upon bonded security has little business to do. And one who refuses friendship except upon a demonstration of advantage has few friends, and enjoys few of the advantages of friendship. There is nothing in our individualism to warrant such a policy in either field; and there are many reasons why a man may more safely extend his field of speculation, and trust more broadly to his intuitions, in friendship than in business. Our individualism is not a set rule of life, but, like every other really fundamental principle, a guiding conception, to be used, not so much in constructing a plan of life as in criticizing the plans already there, in controlling our intuitions as far as possible and proving their validity.


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

§ 118. I hold, therefore, that while the intuitions of love are frequently truer than the calculations of justice, justice is the test that shows whether love is real. Here still, we are dealing with the principles of art and esthetic criticism. We have seen that esthetic appreciation is a relatively unrational and, so far, unconscious process. Now there is a rather widespread tendency in esthetic theory to claim a superiority for esthetic appreciation upon just this ground; to hold that esthetic appreciation is a higher form of spiritual activity just because, and just as far as, it dispenses with the forms of logic, trusts to pure intuition, and makes no attempt to justify its valuations upon utilitarian ground. This may go to the extent of holding that an object to be beautiful must necessarily be useless, and that the man who achieves a result by pure intuition, and could not achieve it otherwise, is a finer type of man than he who could achieve the same result by certain and clear calculation, — in other words, that the man who does not know what he is doing is a finer type than he who does. I need not go into the motives upon which this claim rests. It is but one instance of the attempt to place beauty and utility in absolutely separate worlds, and thus to release the pursuit of the beautiful from the control either of logic or of morality, or of practical worth. In this sense it is claimed that art is "free"; and that scientific criticism of a work of art is, if anything, an impertinence and a desecration. For this view the criticism of a work of art from the standpoint of its utility or logical consistency makes absolutely no difference, — leaves its beauty untouched. What if the beauty be shown to be a mere illusion? It still makes no difference. If the object be satisfying to the esthetic sense, no further question can be asked. It may be practically useless and logically

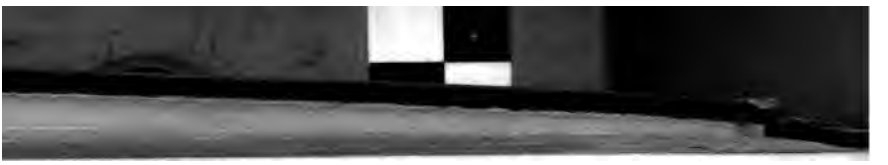


absurd; it is still beautiful. And the same principle is applied to brotherly love. If the feeling of unity is satisfied, justice has nothing to say. The clearer consciousness of the social relation which justice implies makes no difference.

§ 119. For us consciousness always makes a difference. The whole meaning of the doctrine of these lectures is that the value of life consists in its being self-consciously lived, according to the relations which consciousness reveals. And therefore a beauty which is apprehended only in appreciation is a value only partially realized. And a value which upon criticism turns out to involve an illusion is no value whatever. It is false even as beauty. You will be convinced of the truth of this if I offer a simple illustration. In the business part of this city you will find many lofty buildings whose walls of brick or stone masonry present a splendid appearance of massivity and strength. But this in many cases is mere appearance. The structural principle of these buildings is steel, and the stone walls add no more strength to the buildings than so much wall-paper; they do not even support themselves. Are you still impressed with the massivity of the buildings when you realize this fact? I say, when you *realize* the fact? For you may still be cognizant of the fact in an abstract sort of way which leaves your impression unimpaired. But when you definitely face the fact as a fact, when you look upon those walls and see them as a mere veneer, supported and held in place, story by story, by a structure of steel, then, I think, your impression of the massivity of the building is gone, and as a work of art it seems ridiculous and absurd. Just so of brotherly love. A love that is seen to rest upon no intelligent sympathy, no reciprocity of interests, no coordination of behavior, is

not even real love. We honor a father who is loyal to the end to a wretched scape-grace of a son, — if there remain a spark of filial recognition and respect. But take the case of Père Goriot, disowned, despised, and exploited by his two heartless daughters, for whom he yet passionately yearns. Here the attachment is a deplorable weakness, no longer an intelligent feeling, but a brute instinct, to be pitied, but never to be admired.

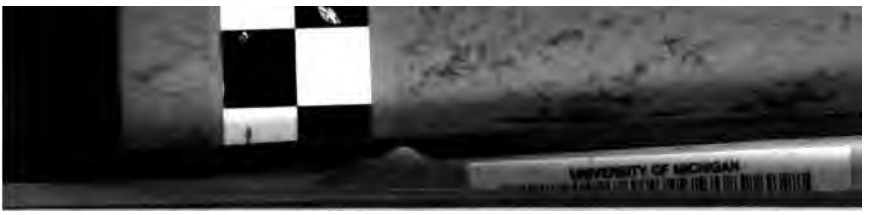
§ 120. This, however, is far from saying that social life is to be a matter of mathematical calculation according to abstract rule, — that is to say, of calculation *in place of* feeling. We have seen, indeed, that science, as distinct from art, deals with the abstract aspects of things. This is true; the ideal of each science is to reduce that aspect of things implied in its special point of view, if possible, to a mathematical formula. And this agrees so far with the popular notion of science as cold-blooded, abstract, devoid of feeling, interested only in formal laws, and indifferent to the warmth and color of concrete life. But all this is due to the necessary limitations of the scientific point of view, of the point of view which will first of all be clear. There is no logical contradiction between wealth of feeling and clearness of idea; the contradiction, so far as it exists, is a brute fact, connected with the, to us inexplicable, limitations of our consciousness. But these limitations are no more a part of the scientific ideal than the vagueness of our esthetic appreciations is a part of our ideal of beauty. In both cases the ideal is to be more conscious. And so we find that no scientist worthy of the name aims to stop with abstract *formulæ*. These are not constructed merely to be put away upon the subconscious shelf. Their purpose is to be used in re-thinking the concrete facts.



In this process they are to receive life and development. Their meaning is to be realized, — made real for feeling as an immediate conscious fact. And in the same process the visible world is to be rationalized, — or, in other words, made luminous as the realization of an idea. When you grasp the point of this you will understand how it is that science has its own esthetic delights. The scientific man sees in nature ever new developments of fundamental ideas, through which the ideas themselves acquire a greater significance and life; and his whole aim is to realize in nature a system of living truth. And thus, in their upward movement, the processes of science and of esthetic appreciation follow converging lines, and the ideal would be found where they meet, — that is to say, in a perfectly conscious process which both *sees* the relations of things in transparent clearness of idea and *feels* their immediate reality as the finally complete and concrete expression of idea.

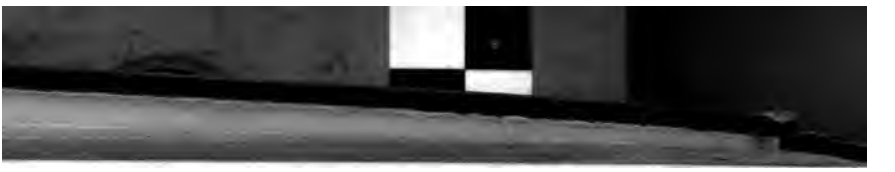
It has been said of Dante that he was as logically resolute as Euclid himself. Perfect art is always the perfection of logic; a perfect scientific achievement is the perfection of art. Beauty is never destroyed by analysis except as the intelligence which deals with it is merely abstract; otherwise it is made only more beautiful. To me the beauty of a building is enhanced by a perception of structural perfection. And even a cantilever bridge is a beautiful object if only I can realize, — not "formulate," but grasp in a single, all-at-once, detailed view the mutual implications of its several parts. And so, once more, of love. Perfect sympathy between perfectly clear-sighted persons is to my mind a far more beautiful thing to contemplate than a blind mingling of self-effacing emotion.

§ 121. Thus the aim of our social relation is not a life


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

without feeling, nor a life of mere feeling, but a self-conscious and self-critical realization of the meaning of feeling in perfect clearness of insight and consequently perfect adjustment. And this brings us again to the Greek conception of justice. For the Greeks, as we have seen, this conception expressed a social ideal based first of all upon knowledge. But knowledge, as I have suggested, was for them not the cold-blooded process it often seems to us. And beside justice and knowledge, as explaining and developing them, we must place a third conception equally expressive of the Greek mind; that, namely, of harmony and proportion. If you will examine these conceptions you will see that they are all the outcome of the same logical motive. What the Greek sought in knowledge was truth in perfect definiteness of outline; and there can be no definiteness of outline except as the facts and details are coordinated and harmonized in a scientific system. But what he sought again in harmony was just this coordination and adjustment of perfectly definite differences. For harmony, like every other form of unity, implies difference; and it is rich or poor according to the amount of difference present. There is no harmony in unison. There is little in the mere blending of tones. A significant harmony demands a complex set of differences; and the richest harmony is found where the differences verge toward discord. And so the demand for knowledge, while on the one hand expressing the needs of our practical life, is at the same time the expression of a logical and esthetic ideal, which seeks to order both thought and life with perfect definiteness and proportion.

§ 122. The expression of this ideal in the social order is justice. For Plato justice, as embodied in the ideal state, was at once the final and complete harmony



among individual natures and their perfect internal adjustment. The ideal state was to be a mutual adjustment of individual needs in perfect measure and proportion. It must be said, however, that Plato failed to grasp the richness and variety of the needs to be adjusted, — certainly as these would be represented in the personal aspirations of men of today. And therefore, to grasp the full significance of the ideal of justice we must go beyond Plato's presentation and define our ideal by contrast, not only with him, but also with the legal and social conventions of modern times. I think that no one who gives serious consideration to the established maxims and principles of the law can fail to be impressed with the nicety and justice of its discriminations. Yet any student of law will admit that the judgments of the courts fall short, at their best, of ideal justice. The most that he can say is that they are the best under the conditions, *i.e.*, of an imperfect grasp of the complexity of personal relations. And therefore the adjustments of individual interests effected by the courts are neither artistically beautiful nor scientifically accurate. Nicer and more discriminating than those of ruder times, they still involve a large measure of irrational and enforced sacrifice; and the result is not a harmonious adjustment in the true sense, but an imperfect compromise.

Ideal justice aims at nothing less than a perfect and complete harmony; and there can be no perfect harmony short of perfect freedom and self-expression for the individual. The conception of justice implies a mutually profitable reciprocity. In strict justice I should receive, in terms of my own valuation, at least more than I give away, just as, in the economic world, a transaction must promise a profit for both parties, to be logically conceivable or possible. Apart from this mutual self-expansion



justice is an impotent social motive. Any problem of justice presupposes that between the conflicting personal interests there is *some* basis of understanding that will leave each party both better pleased with himself and better pleased with his fellow. Of this problem legal justice is never more than a partial solution. It stops at a conventionally fixed limit of rights and obligations. Ideal justice would consider every aspect of the problem, doing justice, on both sides, to every personal motive. Its solution would then issue in the final removal of every maladjustment that stands in the way of good fellowship with personal freedom.

Now when the conception of justice is thus defined — and defined, as I conceive, with sober logical accuracy — it will be clear that justice as a social ideal is nothing mean or uninspiring. On the contrary, I can conceive of no ideal more worthy of the position which we claim for ourselves as self-conscious and rational beings. For, as I have pointed out, the one thing, that gives value to our life, the one thing that makes human life either noble or mean, or makes it in any sense a spiritual life, is the fact that it is consciously lived. And justice is simply the self-conscious realization of the social possibilities of conscious beings. If I have preferred the language of justice to that of love it is because I wish to emphasize the conditions of understanding and adjustment. I have no wish to make our life narrower than need be, only to make it a matter of intelligent control. If you will follow the conception of justice to the point where it issues in the finer adjustments, you will see, I think, that ideal justice calls for nothing less than that perfect sympathy and understanding, that final removal of barriers to intercourse between man and man, which we call love. Only, as thus conceived, love is not the expression of



humility and self-sacrifice. It is rather, for each of the parties concerned, the finally definite assertion of himself and of his place in the social order of rational beings.


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

IV Self-Sacrifice and Merit

§ 123. The social ideal which satisfies the demands of intelligence is justice; justice is also beautiful; is it, however, in the final sense moral? To this question I must devote a brief closing section of this lecture. For I can imagine a still unsatisfied critic insisting upon the following objection: "In what has been developed (he may say) I still fail to discover the distinctive quality of virtue. You place before us a picture of a harmony of individual interests, expressing the final development of intelligence. This is all very beautiful, but is it also moral? For what does it really amount to? Simply a neat arrangement whereby each makes a profit for himself out of his services to his fellows. And since his social service costs him ultimately nothing, in what sense is his conduct meritorious? Is it not clear that virtue, which is value in its moral aspect, implies merit? And can merit be won otherwise than through hardship and difficulty, through cost and sacrifice? A mutually profitable adjustment may be good, from a utilitarian standpoint, and from an esthetic standpoint even beautiful; morally, however, is it not poorer than the meanest result won through self-devotion and self-sacrifice?"

§ 124. In reply to these questions I will say that, while I accept the quality of merit as a criterion of moral value, I deny that merit is in any way a matter of sacrifice. And first I wish to point out that the notion of merit as won by sacrifice is the expression of an ideal not so strictly moral as sentimental and romantic. To put the matter flatly, it is a feminine ideal. I am, indeed, very loath to put it this way, because I believe that neither intelligence nor morality are, or ought to be, a question of sex.



But it is the best way of suggesting what I mean. For the region in which the criterion of self-sacrifice is most frequently applied in common life is the measurement of the virtues of a lover or a husband. The good husband of popular sentiment is estimated less by the thoughtfulness and inclusiveness with which he plans the comfort both of himself and his wife than by his readiness to sacrifice himself. To the romantic mind it seems that the inclusion of himself within the scope of his thoughtfulness destroys its moral value; and the more blindly he makes the sacrifice — indeed, the more unnecessarily — the more nearly he approaches the dimensions of the chivalrous ideal. Sir Walter Raleigh casting his cloak over the mud before Elizabeth is a typical illustration. A cloak, I imagine, is a very poor sort of bridge for slippered feet across a puddle of mud. A dry board, or something of the kind, would be much more to the point; and its discovery at the opportune moment might have been a triumph both of ready wit and thoughtful kindness, — but from the standpoint of chivalry, how contemptible!

Neither in ethics nor in economics is cost, or sacrifice, a criterion of value. Granting that my friend in serving me makes a profit for himself, what difference does it make? As a rational and responsible being he could not be expected to plan otherwise. On the other hand, if he has neglected his own interests the value of the service is diminished by a somewhat unwelcome burden of obligation. And if the neglect has been wilful and unnecessary, due to a failure to consider the terms of the problem, the obligation is as exasperating as that of repaying lost money. But if he has profited why should I not rejoice? And on what moral ground could I do otherwise? Shall we say that such rejoicing is the


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

expression of a mean and narrow pride which hesitates to extend the right hand of fellowship in a relation of mutual dependence and obligation? Surely not. If my fellow has really included me in his plans — if he has really entered into my purposes, and comes to me with a genuine, and no merely specious "proposition of mutual advantage" — then, apart from any sacrifice whatever, the personal obligation is established, and he *merits* both my gratitude and my consideration in return.

§ 125. This, then, is the essence of merit: not sacrifice, but conscious consideration. The only man who "does things," to use a vulgar phrase, is the man who consciously does them. The man who does good to me is the man who intends my good. It matters not that he also intends his own good. It is of the very nature of conscious action to include both, each as reinforcing the other. The demand for sacrifice presupposes, in fact, a materialistic theory of desire. If, however, the good that I enjoy is a good intended by him, then, whatever else he may have intended, it is no accidental gift of nature; it has *come from him;* and he has won merit, in the fullest sense of the term.[25]

§ 126. Accordingly, a man acquires merit toward his fellows by a *readiness to consider* their interests as con-

[25] The present discussion is confined to the ethical field. I wish to suggest, however, that the conception of merit, as here outlined, may be used to interpret the cost-theories of economic values. The cost-theories represent the claim made upon the market by the producing agent, whose merit is commonly based upon the conception of sacrifice, or labor — or the pain of labor, as involving both. But production is a question neither of sacrifice nor of labor, but of creative intelligence, including of course its expression in action. It is this that distinguishes the manufactured product from the gift of nature; and this is the only ground upon which, if at all, it could claim a special recognition on the market.



nected with his own. All such terms as thoughtfulness, considerateness, generosity, broad-mindedness, or open-mindedness, imply an attitude genuinely moral. None of them, however, contains any necessary implication of self-sacrifice. What is implied in them all is a determination to think, — and thus to cover a broader field of interests than those of the immediate present. And just this thinking doing of things I hold to be the essence of all virtue, and to be the precise point aimed at in that conception. It will be observed that I include doing in thinking. According to the doctrine of these lectures there can be, for a conscious agent, no divorce between them. Only, I exclude self-sacrifice. Nor, for a certain degree of virtue, is it necessary that the interests of *others* find admission to the field. For surely prudence is a virtue. Under the absorbing influence of the "social," this aspect of morality has been well-nigh forgotten. Yet certainly the personally ambitious man, the man who finds it worth while to plan and work for a career, is, however narrow his ambition, a finer moral type than the man who at each moment is absorbed by the present enjoyment. Here, again, however, the essence of his virtue is not that he blindly sacrifices the present to the future, but that he extends his imagination beyond what is immediately before him and embraces the present and the future in an inclusive point of view. In this he fulfils the distinctive function of a conscious being. It is the fulfilment of this function that makes the animal nobler than a machine and gives a certain moral quality even to the horse that heeds the whip. It is only a higher development of the same function that distinguishes a man from a beast; and a still further development that makes him a member of a social order. But in all these gradations of virtue the essence of virtue is the same.


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Virtue is acquired, and merit is won, by the mere exercise of forethought.

§ 127. When it is claimed that merit involves self-sacrifice what is obscurely implied is that consciousness is a form of energy, and that as such it is subject to the law of conservation of energy. According to this law energy may be transformed, but never diminished or increased. Hence, from the standpoint of energy alone, the sum of reality after a transaction must be just what it was before. In the theory of self-sacrifice the same idea is applied to the conception of value. Obscurely it is implied that value, like matter and energy, can at any rate not be increased. You cannot both eat your cake and have it. A pleasure bestowed upon your neighbor is subtracted from your own stock of happiness. Assuming that a service to him involves attention to his welfare, and that attention is an expenditure of energy, the energy so expended must be so far a dead loss. Where favors are returned with interest the expenditures must be compared with the receipts; and if the transaction shows a profit for you, the net result of your service to him is a *minus* quantity.

Now I shall not deny that consciousness is a form of energy. I will say rather that if consciousness and energy are to be admitted to the same world, this must in some sense be true. Only, what will be our conception of energy when this coordination is made, and what meaning we shall then attach to the law of conservation of energy, is quite another question, and a question altogether too complicated to be even stated in our present argument. In the meantime it will be sufficient to note that, assuming that the law of conservation governs the sum of energy, quite another law governs the sum of value. Energy can be neither created nor



destroyed; value may be. Assuming a given fixed quantity of (unintelligent) energy in the world, the amount of value which this energy represents is a question of its economical distribution; and this is a question of intelligence. And with the increase, through intelligence, in the value of the sum of energy there is at the same time a decrease in the expenditure of energy required for the attainment of any given value. For an infinite intelligence the expenditure would be zero; and this is what we mean when we say that for God all things are possible, — under any conditions whatever.

Accordingly, we may assume that thinking requires effort of attention, and that this involves a certain expenditure of energy; and therefore, perhaps, that a broader consideration, which includes my neighbor as well as myself, will involve an increased expenditure. It does not follow from this that self-sacrifice is the net result. And the absolute sacrifice will be in inverse ratio to the intelligence employed. Nor does it follow that the energy so expended could, from the standpoint of self-interest, be better employed in the exclusive consideration of personal ends. All of our previous argument has served to show that the opposite is true; and in the present argument this result is assumed, the only question being whether a net result of mutual profit is compatible with virtue. But if it be not so, the alternative statement must be that virtue is the correlative of stupidity, of the unintelligent expenditure of energy, as it is sometimes claimed to be. And as against this result I shall simply repeat that virtue is the realization of the possibilities of self-conscious and intelligent beings. The superiority of intelligence means that it decreases the sacrifice necessary for the attainment of a given result. At the lowest and least conscious stage


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

of choice a man simply foregoes one item of good for the sake of another; at a higher stage, however, he begins to consider plans for retaining both. And such plans succeed, even within the range of ordinary common sense. Over and over again we meet with cases where, by a very moderate exercise of intelligence, a man increases the immediate value of the present just by thinking of the future, or his own good by considering his neighbor. By his thoughtfulness the element of sacrifice is diminished. Yet just so far is the element of virtue increased. For the element of virtue is the thoughtfulness itself.

§ 128. Still I may be asked, "What if all men were, in your sense, perfectly virtuous? Suppose that men reached such a stage of intelligence and mutual understanding that all individual interests were finally coordinated, so that the consideration of mutual interests represented the easiest and most inevitable expression of natural impulse. This would be beautiful, perhaps; and certainly intelligent; but, once more, would it be moral? Would there be any meaning for virtue in such a state?" To this I should reply that, provided the state of perfection were a self-conscious state, and not merely a finally complete condition of unconscious, mechanical coordination, — that is to say, if it were a truly social state, then virtue would mean all that it does now, and more. For virtue, as I may repeat, is not a question of the difficulty involved in the coordination, but of the extent to which the coordination is the expression of conscious life. And the state of perfect coordination, if conceivable as a conscious social state, would be simply the final realization of our capacities of consciousness, the state in which, as conscious agents, we should be finally efficient and free.



But in the meantime we need have no fear that the virtue of open-minded consideration will become a cheap and easy virtue, or that it will ever be lacking in dignity and high significance. Open-mindedness is not so much a state as a practical attitude. And we are not by nature open-minded. By nature, in the brute sense, we are passionate, prejudiced, suspicious, small-minded, and mean. When a difficulty arises with your neighbor, Nature says, "Strike first and investigate afterwards." When your butcher overcharges you, Nature suggests that you leave the bill wholly unpaid. If your neighbor insults you, forget that he has any rights whatever. To be steadfastly reasonable under provocation (not patiently humble), to remember your neighbor's interests when he has forgotten yours, to meet injustice with exact justice, violence with temperate consideration, — I can conceive of no virtue of a higher order, no conception of morality which expresses more exactly the superiority of spiritual agents over brute force.



LECTURE IV

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND THE SOCIAL PROBLEM





LECTURE IV

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

I The Theory of Natural Rights

From the psychological aspects of individualism in the Second Lecture, and the ethical aspects in the Third, I turn now, in this last lecture, to its political and economic aspects. I am well aware that in this field I have, from a professional and perhaps from a personal standpoint, little right to speak. But on the other hand if one end of the social problem lies in the special fields of politics and economics, the other end of it lies just as surely in the field of moral philosophy. I may therefore undertake to state the situation as it appears from our own end — from the standpoint of our psychological and ethical individualism — leaving it to be understood that our interpretation will require justification in the other special fields.

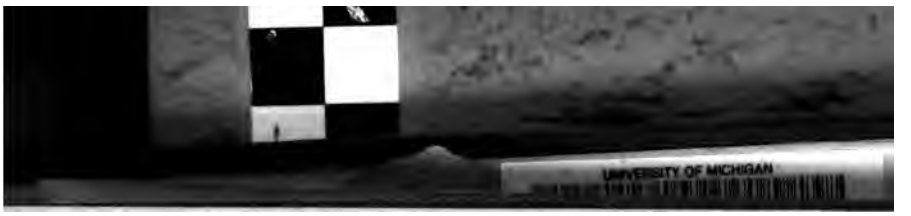
§ 129. The special purpose of this lecture is to rehabilitate, on the basis of our analysis of consciousness, the doctrine of natural rights and the coordinate doctrine of the social contract. I suppose that no respectable philosopher now accepts this theory.[1] And in its older

[1] Since this was written the idea of the social contract has been revived by Mr. C. Y. C. Dawbarn in *The Social Contract* (1910), which is the complement of his larger volume, *Liberty and Progress* (1909). His point of view is that of Bentham rather than that of the natural rights school.



and still common form it is, as we have seen, open to serious objections. The main lines of the eighteenth-century view were indicated in our last lecture. The primitive state of man was conceived as a "state of nature." In this idea it was presupposed that the individuals composing the human race were at the beginning more or less isolated. At least there was plenty of elbow-room and a plentiful supply of the necessities of life, so that mutual aid was not a crying necessity. By virtue of these conditions, then, men were created free and equal. And as thus created they were invested with a natural, and forever inalienable, right of liberty and life. These rights were not forfeited when, at a later period, under the pressure of growing numbers, they organized societies for mutual advantage. In the organization of these societies there was implied a "social contract," by the terms of which each individual consented to a certain limitation of his natural rights in return for an equal limitation of the rights of every other. In the meantime the rights whose surrender is not required for the maintenance of the social order, and which are therefore not covered by the social contract, remain wholly in the possession of the individual. Such, in outline, is the logic of the older theory.

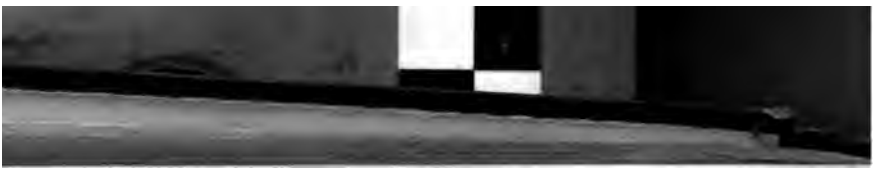
§ 130. Now of course there is no historical ground for this conception, — if, indeed, any was ever seriously offered; nor is there any conceivable psychological ground. Men could never have been altogether isolated. And logically or psychologically, the conception of an individual before society — an individual having the distinguishing attributes of a human individual — is quite absurd. Granting that you are a thorough individual in your tastes and opinions, still


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

your point of view is related to those of your fellows. It is not, indeed, the reflection of theirs, but it is none the less a response to theirs. And if you had nothing to which you could respond, you could have nothing whatever to say for yourself.

In view of this relationship — and from a one-sided view of it — the later nineteenth century has reversed the eighteenth-century view. In the view of the nineteenth century the individual is the product of society, — by heredity, by tradition, by education and training. And by the same logic individual rights are conferred by the social order. A right, it is often said, is the correlate of an actual social condition. On what ground will you claim a right which nobody will recognize, and which without recognition you cannot enforce? Your right to bequeath your property, your right to enjoy it during your lifetime, nay your right to live, are the outcome of the state's guarantee of protection. And since the state is the origin and foundation of all personal rights, it follows that they are granted for the benefit of the state. Your worth to the state determines even your right to live. What you are worth to yourself is a matter of no consequence, — or at least of not more consequence than would be represented by the ratio which your good bears to the total good of the millions of your fellow-citizens.

§ 131. Now in my last lecture I undertook to show that the individual is not the product of society. And so I will repeat here that the individual citizen is not the product of the state. As a self-conscious individual he is not the *product* of anything. The term "product," in the sense of the effect of a cause, applies only to mechanical bodies, and, as Professor Royce has shown, it is inapplicable to ideas and purposes. Here the



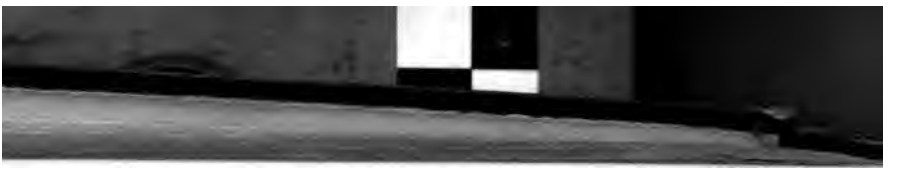
motive factor is not a cause but a reason. Now the world of physical science is an expression of the axiom that the effect must be exactly equivalent to the cause. The conservation of matter and of energy rest upon this axiomatic ground. Likewise the sign of equality connecting the two sides of a chemical equation. And when it is said that the individual is the product of society, or the product of his heredity and environment, it is upon the basis of this physical analogy. The relation might be expressed in a *quasi*-chemical formula, H + E = I, or perhaps, H + S = I. Now this formula will perhaps hold good so far as the individual you have in mind is not a conscious individual. Once assume, however, that your individual acts consciously, that he not only acts but knows that he acts, and knows what he does, then, I say, so far as this is true, the mechanical equivalence of cause and effect falls at once to the ground. At any rate the mechanical formula fails now to cover the special facts of the case. The son of a dissolute man who is conscious of that fact is so far freed from the operation of the hereditary tendency. The son of a serious and honorable man may be more than ever bound by example, — not by a hereditary cause, but by the sympathetic acceptance and recognition of a social (here a filial) relation. In either case, however, the conscious reaction of the individual to his hereditary tendency is a new and unique fact, the expression of a new and original point of view which is personal and peculiar to himself. So of the individual before the law of the state. Let him once become aware that he is a member of the body politic, then, though its laws may impose an ever greater moral obligation, they will not, as causes, determine his action. His action will then express his own conception of value, whatever it may be,


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

and though a law-abiding citizen, he will be, for the state, an original force rather than a subject, or product of its laws.

§ 132. On this ground I stand for the doctrine of natural rights. The doctrine here advanced differs from both the earlier and the later view. The later view holds that since the individual is the product of the social order his rights are the expression of social or political authority; but the individual is not the product of the social order. The earlier view held that, since men were created free and equal, the individual possesses, by virtue of inheritance, a natural independence and equality with his fellows. But men were not created free and equal. Nor would this fact, as a mere fact, constitute a *right* to independence; for a right, especially a "natural" right, must rest upon the nature of the man and not upon his circumstances. Nor, for this reason, could an individual right be a right by inheritance. According to my view all of these considerations are irrelevant. The right of the individual to attain his ends rests not upon the will of society, not upon inheritance, not upon genealogy or history — upon no external authority whatever; *but solely and completely upon the fact that he is a conscious agent and knows what he is doing.*

For consider, if you please, upon what ground a right may be asserted, by an individual, by society, by a lower animal, or for that matter by an object of wood or stone. Solely, you will say, upon the ground that the right asserted represents value. But all value is the creation of consciousness. Take consciousness out of the world, and with it you have removed every vestige of value, economic, moral, esthetic, logical. But on the other hand, as I have argued earlier, all

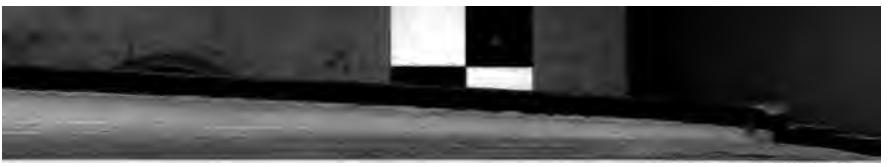


consciousness is consciousness of value. Value is not the correlate of mere willing or desiring, conceived as detachable features of consciousness, but of consciousness as such, — of the merest knowing. Conceive a locomotive just to *know* what it is doing: it cannot be conceived to know without also aiming at an end. You cannot conceive yourself to know a fact and yet to remain totally indifferent to that fact; that which is totally indifferent can never be an object for consciousness. But all consciousness is individual. Just so far as it is conscious it is the consciousness of a personal agent. And *therefore*, as I have now several times affirmed, its end is individual, and the value in question is individual so far as it is valuable. To me the conception of a self-conscious agent seeking ends not his own is thoroughly incoherent, irrational, and self-contradictory. The only ground upon which I can conceive him to act at all is that the ends express value *for him*. Value exists in the world so far as there are individuals who know what they are doing, where they are, and what they stand for; and "social values," in the sense of values floating about loose, related to no distinguishable individual agents, or expressing no reciprocity of regard between individual agents, are to me altogether meaningless. On this ground, then, I stand for the right of the individual conscious agent to seek his personal ends, — on the ground that as a conscious and personal agent he is the source, the criterion, and the creator of all value, and thus the end by which all value is to be measured, not only of material goods, but of the whole fabric of our institutions, including the state.

§ 133. But since consciousness is a matter of degree the right of the individual to seek his ends is also a


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

matter of degree. That is to say, the right is relative to the degree of intelligence expressed in it. I do not recognize the right of a hungry man to snatch the nearest loaf of bread. For no right is implied in a blind animal impulse, but only in an impulse intelligently directed. If the grasp of the nearest loaf expresses an intelligent choice, a choice that considers the several aspects of the situation, that fact will so far justify the right, though the loaf be mine. But in that case I presuppose that the fact of "mine" has been given full weight, such weight as I, upon mature reflection, should wish it to have. Consequently, I reject the formula, "From every man according to his abilities and to every man *according to his needs*." No right is implied in a need except as it be an intelligent need. And therefore I also reject "the right of every man to a living." No man has a right to live just because he is alive any more than a fire has a right to burn because it is burning. Yet, in so far as living implies self-consciousness, it may be said that every man has a right to some sort of a living. Here, however, his right rests upon more than animal grounds. Yet not upon "social" grounds. For him it is not a question of the meaning of his life for others, but of its meaning for himself. And so far as he is certain of his meaning he will be justified in asserting his claim and demanding its recognition by the world. For the same reason a man of high intelligence has a right to a very complete living. Thus it may be said that the true artist, or scholar, or statesman, has a just claim upon society for recognition and support. But any such claim must rest upon the intrinsic significance of his work, not upon a mere preference for the academic or political life; for this may be as deficient in meaning as the instinct of hunger.



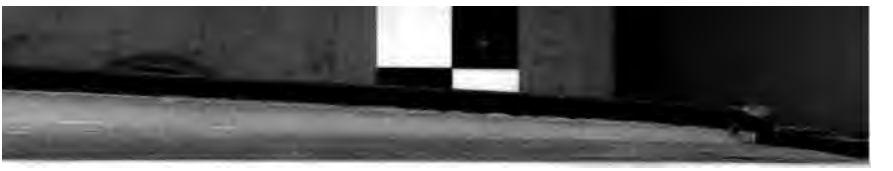
§ 134. But now if the several individual ends conflict, what then? Whose right is to take precedence of another's? This, indeed, is the test question for a theory of individual rights, — not because the welfare of society is the test of the rights of the individual, but because the assertion of incompatible rights is a self-contradictory, and hence meaningless, assertion. But if the argument of the previous lectures has been successful it will be clear to you that the ends of conscious individuals cannot conflict so far as they are really conscious. For a conscious activity is, so far, by its very nature adjustable. And therefore the attitude which you adopt in claiming your rights of a fellow-man is very different from that adopted toward a mechanical object, and different again in the degree to which he is different. When you are confronted with a mechanical obstruction you treat the situation solely from the standpoint of your private interests. If the lot upon which you are to build is encumbered with rock you blast it out and get rid of it as easily as possible. For it has no rights that you are bound to respect and it can furnish you with no ground for treating it as end in itself. Your fellow-man, as a self-conscious and intelligent being, is an end for himself. But if you are an intelligent being he is also an end for you. For not only can he confront you with effective opposition. This is only a negative consideration. Indeed, it is almost irrelevant. For conceive, if you please, of two intelligent agents engaged, with perfect mutual intelligence, in a game of mutual destruction, — is it not clear that the notion involves an absolute self-contradiction? The merest glimmer of the real situation must show that they are missing the point. For the fact is that, as intelligent, and thus self-adjustable


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

and self-governing, agents, each can furnish the other with rational and profitable grounds for respecting his ends. In other words, your fellow can recommend his end in terms of yours and you can do the same for him. The thing needed is a mutual understanding. By virtue of this social relation the conflict of ends which would otherwise make light of the conception of individual rights is replaced, therefore, by a cooperative harmony which, so far, not only confirms the right of each intelligent individual to seek his own ends but imposes upon each other intelligent individual the obligation to respect them.

And so, to the question, What if the rights conflict? my answer would be: the rights of intelligent persons cannot, so far, conflict. The unintelligent have, so far, no rights. And between the intelligent and the unintelligent the right lies with the intelligent. Here there may be conflict, in some mechanical sense, but no conflict of rights.

§ 135. This view of the social aspect of individual rights is altogether remote from the view that individual rights are won by social service, or constituted by social approval. The notion of service is one of those oriental paradoxes whose chief result is to confuse the issue for European thought. That an intelligent activity must be *serviceable*, — so much is not only admitted, but affirmed. But in a society of intelligent beings there are no "servants." No self-respecting man conceives himself to be under obligation to pass around the fruits of his intelligence on a silver plate to a complaisant and self-indulgent public. Rather may we say that it is for them to help themselves; or, better, to meet the issue which he raises with an active, individual, and cooperative response, which shall realize the value of



his work for them and at the same time increase its value for him. In a word, then, the obligation to produce results of value *to others* rests in last analysis upon the others themselves. Indeed, from the very nature of value it can rest nowhere else. And since, in the absence of their self-assertion, the individual cannot be responsible for the welfare of others as such, it follows that his rights are not to be measured in terms of social service actually achieved. Provided that he has justified his intelligence by a serviceable offer, and that no reasonable effort has been spared to secure an intelligent response, his right to realize his own ends remains unimpaired; and so far as he can realize them without cooperation, or even in the face of opposition, he may with a clear conscience proceed to do so. For him it is a question only of the clearness and consistency with which they are conceived.

§ 136. The justification of an individual right rests upon precisely the same ground as that of an individual's assertion of a fact. When Galileo claimed that the earth "does move" his assertion was not so true, indeed, as it is today; not, however, because the truth is the assertion of the many — *semper et ubique* — rather than of the one, but because, through the cooperative interpretation of the intelligent many, new considerations are advanced, and new aspects of meaning developed, which render the original assertion more intelligible and significant. In this way an individual right acquires no doubt a firmer justification when recognized by a society of intelligent persons, — because such recognition involves a sympathetic interpretation which develops more clearly its original grounds. But — just because this is the ground of its justification — it is not for the individual to defer to the authority


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

of his fellows, — not more than for Galileo to defer to the authority of the Church or, by anticipation, of modern science. For the claimant to a right, as for Galileo, the sole final question is the internal clearness and consistency of his self-assertion and the breadth of consideration upon which it rests. And just as Galileo's assertion may be said to have imposed an obligation upon science rather than to have been justified by its sanction, so, I may repeat, whenever a man of creative power appears, in art, in science, in statesmanship, in industry, the responsibility rests upon his fellows of getting *their* values out of him, while his right rests upon his certain consciousness of the rationality of his aims.

§ 137. A theory of so broad a scope hardly admits of proof in the stricter sense of the term, and I must content myself with a few illustrations. The first is drawn from my own profession, and on its more domestic side. You will pardon its seeming insignificance because, as I think, it offers a crucial instance. For I suppose that no other profession has been more imposed upon by the idea of "social service." We are constantly invited to remember that, while other men may have their own aims and live their own lives, ours is a "missionary work"; that our obligation to the student is unlimited while his obligation to us is negligible. Our so-called scientific pedagogy has reached the point where it practically releases the student from responsibility, moral or intellectual, and insists upon an education which (as Mr. Punch would say) shall involve no strain upon the mind. Now I suppose I cannot better illustrate my theory of rights than by stating my view of my own. And for my own part I should say quite frankly that I am in the profession for what I can get out of it, —



for the same reason that other men, including other teachers, — other intelligent men, I am in logic bound to say — follow their various vocations. Not, indeed, for the money to be gained from it, — obviously not that, though by no means to the exclusion of that. But first, perhaps, for the liberty which the profession affords, at least for the college professor. I can think of no other walk in life where a man is so fully his own master and can order his professional work so completely to express his own taste and judgment. Secondly, however, — and not less — because, as compared with the relation of teacher and pupil, there are few forms of social intercourse, among those involved in the exercise of a profession, which are so stimulating and so truly humane. By the side of teaching — any teaching — I feel that buying and selling is almost a brutal occupation. And for this reason there are few relations in life where the mutual advantage is so complete. It is not all for the pupil. At least I believe that no teacher of philosophy could deny that, in the development of his ideas, his students had played an important part. But all this implies a mutuality of intelligence; and a mutuality of responsibility by which the right on both sides is justified. It is no part of a teacher's duty, certainly not of the college teacher's, to minister to his pupil's edification, to flatter his prejudices, and "lead him to truth" along the primrose path. Truth for him lies not that way. He must get it for himself through a "wrestling of the spirit" with the issues placed before him. And if he declines to meet an issue once fairly presented he forfeits his right to the "social service." [2]

[2] Assuming, of course, that it is not otherwise justified on pecuniary grounds.


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Some time ago one of a class of sixty students in formal logic approached me with the complaint that somehow he failed to understand the subject, and the polite suggestion that I should use some of my leisure time in giving him private instruction. I thought I recognized in him one of those who expect to enter the Kingdom of Heaven by professing an interest in the subject, but I was ready to give him a chance. So I asked him what part of the subject he had found particularly difficult. Well, he didn't quite know; it was all very confusing. Had he read the several chapters thus far covered in the text-book? Oh, certainly; very carefully. Which of them had been the most difficult? Again, he could not tell; they were all difficult. I then instructed him to go over the text from the beginning, make a careful analysis of the argument in writing, note the difficulties, and formulate them as far as possible in definite questions in writing; then to bring it all to me. He went away sorrowful. A few days later I was notified that he had withdrawn from the class in logic. But if he had come with the program only half completed I must have recognized an almost indefinite extent of obligation; not merely because he had met the issue raised by me, but because, apart from that, he would have raised an issue for me which, as one who claimed to be a teacher, I could not with self-respect ignore. Moreover, it would also have been positively stimulating to deal with a man who could recognize the responsibility of stating his questions in categorical form. And it is easily possible that, in the effort to remove his difficulties, I should have discovered a better way of putting things and thus have gained some further insight into the principles of logic. As it was, I was glad to be rid of an unprofitable customer.



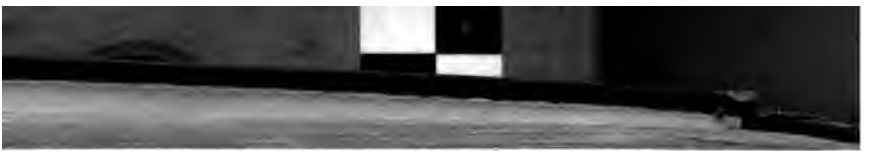
In my opinion this illustrates the relation of rights and obligations very exactly. No one who respects his calling as a teacher can afford to underestimate his obligations to his students. And to one who really belongs in the profession a seriously formulated inquiry presents an irresistible appeal, in the response to which he gets out of his professional work, in part at least, just that sort of immediate satisfaction for which he pursues it and at the same time furthers his own development along the lines distinctively his own. But the rights, the obligations, and the profits are all strictly correlative. From either side it will hold that only he has a claim to the profits of the situation who approaches it with an intelligently formulated demand; that this in turn is the only kind of demand he is bound to respect; that the response to such a demand will yield him a profit, and that in its absence he will be wasting time and effort which on all accounts could be more profitably expended elsewhere.

§ 138. I have introduced this domestic illustration because I think it has a nice application to some of the larger social relations, — in particular to the relation of employer and employee, or master and servant, popularly known as the relation of capital and labor. Older notions were apt to be that the master by paying the servant had purchased him body and soul. At the present time we are more likely to hear that the only justification of the position of master is the welfare of the servant. Between the two I prefer the older notion as being, for its time, somewhat less erroneous. For this idea prevailed before the days of labor-unions, when, though there was more or less complaint of injustice done to labor, there was little intelligent self-assertion on the part of labor itself. Nor is this


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

aspect of the situation wholly past. We still hear a good deal of inert complaint, very often on the part of those who are industrially least efficient and morally least responsible. And in all classes of society it seems to be a favorite notion that the employer should play the part of Lord Bountiful to passive beneficiaries.

According to my view there is, and can be, no obligation to respect the personal interests of those who evade the responsibility of standing for themselves. I believe that every more intelligent employer, like every more intelligent teacher, would prefer, on all accounts, to deal with genuine personalities, — with freemen rather than slaves, if you will pardon the rhetoric. But you cannot convert a slave into a free being any more than you can make a scholar out of a dunce. You may raise the issue and present the invitation, but he alone can achieve the result. It is therefore, as bearing upon the theory of personal rights, very important to note that such is precisely the result that the labor-union is aiming to achieve. The labor-union stands for the awakened self-consciousness of the laboring man. Through this assertion of himself he has acquired in recent years a right to consideration which he may be said not to have possessed before. His self-assertion still fails to express the perfection of intelligence. The argument of violence, of enforced uniformity of wages, of artificial limitation of output and restriction of number of apprentices, — these seem, to me at least, to betray a certain want of self-confidence in labor as labor; and the only argument that will finally establish the rights of labor in an intelligent community is that of intelligence, expressed, among other things, in efficiency. This need not close our eyes to the claims already validated. These, however, include no right



to play the part of master or to treat the employers as the agents and servants of labor. If there be anything genuine in "executive ability" — if it be not (as it often is) a mere name for advantage of position — then the manager is as ever entitled, not, as we say, to his "share," but to his *right*. For it is to be remembered that the notion of shares implies the distribution among passive recipients of a fixed and unalterable quantity, like a "wage fund"; while rights represent the productive activity of intelligent agents, each of which by his participation increases the amount of the product.

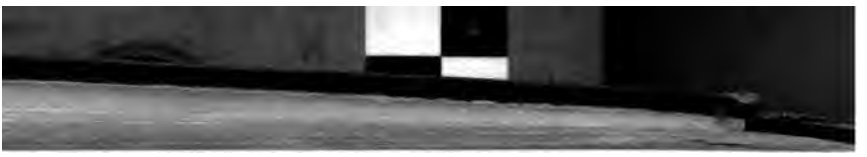
Again, we hear a good deal of more or less futile denunciation in these days of "predatory wealth." Here the question of rights is between the men of wealth on the one side and the general public on the other. Now some of the wealth so denominated represents a clear violation both of law and of common honesty; some of it, again, is the product of questionable devices, such as "trusts," for controlling the markets; and not a little of it, especially the "unearned increment" of land-values, is the unforeseen outcome of imperfect social institutions. But in the popular complaint it is all indistinguishably "predatory," and the term is then extended to define the essential characteristic of all wealth. It is regarded as axiomatic that "no man can *earn* a million dollars," and the implication fails to be noted that "earning," in this sense, is measured, not by the exercise of intelligence, but by the expenditure of brute force and the accumulation of sweat on the brow. However, when we ask what is to be done about it, and more especially what the men of wealth are to do about it, we are met for the most part with nothing much more intelligent than a plan of "education for social service." This means, I sup-



pose, that men of wealth are to be trained to such a pitch of altruism that they will finally turn over all their income — all that cannot be used in colleges and hospitals — to the "conscience-fund" of the public treasury.

To me this point of view suggests that of a man too polite to offer more than a gentle protest when a burglar carries off his goods. If society has a valid claim to this private wealth why does it fail to assert its claim through the regular channels of law? If you object that the mass of the voters are not yet sufficiently enlightened to see the point, then I reply that, so far, their right is open to question. Nor can you then formulate a compelling reason why the possessor of an unearned increment should part with his wealth. He might invest it in educational and charitable enterprise, and this might be his most intelligent way of securing personal satisfaction. It does not follow from our individualism that, as objects of expenditure and experimentation, horses and automobiles are necessarily more interesting than men. But under the conditions as stated — assuming that the wealth is simply "unearned" and not formally stolen — there is no reason why he should be oppressed with an uneasy consciousness of possessing the property of others.[3] On the other hand,

[3] It does not follow that, because the unearned increment has not been earned by its possessor, it has been earned by society. It may never have been earned at all, — which in most cases is the fact. For example, it is clear enough that the great increase of land-values on Manhattan Island is the result of the activity of the whole population of New York City (to go no further). Yet hardly a consciously intended result, rather a result never seriously considered until recent years, and still imperfectly appreciated by most of the population. Earning, however, like all moral conceptions, implies conscious intention. A man who searches intelligently for a lost pocket-book earns his reward. The man who merely stumbles upon it gets the reward, perhaps, but fails to earn



so far as his appropriation were the expression of a superior insight into the values of things, he would have a certain ground for asserting a positive right.

Here he is in the position of a teacher reading a lesson to his fellows, who for the time being are his pupils, — or, in more classical terms, he is "putting it up to them." For a man who invents a labor-saving machine, or an expense-saving method of distribution, or who develops the hitherto unsuspected possibilities of a new country, raises an issue for his fellows which they are in reason bound to meet; and in one direction at least, by recognizing in a general way his right to the profits of his idea. Their problem is, then, through an improvement upon his idea, to make it profitable for themselves; and at the same time to devise a set of institutions which will put his intelligence to the test and compel him, not so much to part with his profits, as to justify them as the fruits of a really significant idea; thus defining in truly logical fashion the proper extent of his right.[4]

it. The same test applies to the earnings of society. A nation which allows valuable public lands to pass into private hands through lack of interest and intelligence should not complain of being robbed. And it may be said that those who have appreciated the value of the lands have, just by that fact, acquired a certain right to them. It is a different question, however, when the situation is brought to consciousness. Through its awakened consciousness of the results of its own activity the nation earns a right to the increment, — so far, of course, as it determines that these results shall be intelligently directed. And whatever increments have been neglected in the past, it may properly insist that future increments shall be apportioned upon a different basis.

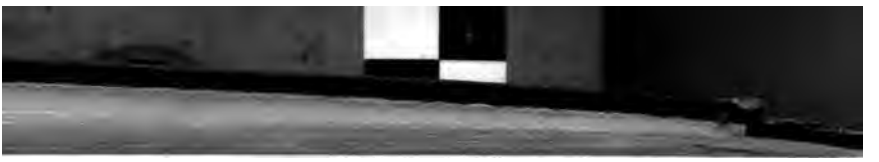
[4] The logic of the problem may be nicely illustrated in the institution of patents. It is commonly asserted that one of the chief results of our patent laws at present is to enable the large manufacturing corporations to buy up new patents, lay them on the shelf, and thus save themselves the expense of installing new machinery. Now of course the inventor has a right to the profits of his original idea, and in a well-ordered society


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Now I am quite humbly mindful of the complexities involved in the application of such an idea to these larger social relations. But I think that the size of the problem should not be allowed to obscure its logical form. As a matter of fact we may see the idea more or less consciously at work in existing institutions. And in any case I hold that the question of the distribution of rights is the same in the larger field of the individual *versus* society as in a transaction between man and man.

§ 139. But if the public has no prior claim because it is public, neither, once more, has the individual a prior claim because he is "private." I have spoken

his fellows would see that these profits were secured to him on a liberal basis. Theoretically I would suggest that, as a preliminary basis, he is entitled to what it would pay his fellows to give him rather than wait for another to make the discovery, — that is, he is to be paid according to the essential originality of his idea. But as this may involve some delicate questions I will not press the point. The consideration of importance for the logic of rights is that, if his fellows assume a responsibility, they have also rights of their own, the first of which is to have the invention placed upon the market at a price which permits a reasonably general use. It is not a question of the enforcement of the "common good." If the inventor can do better without a patent, let him try it. If no one can duplicate the product after examining it, he is justified as against "society." But if others can guess his secret, his originality is not so great as it would seem. And if he needs the special cooperation of his fellows to realize the profits of his idea, they are entitled to a special profit as partners in the enterprise. In his *Social Contract*, Mr. Dawbarn goes so far as to claim that, even on a basis of *laissez faire*, the state should receive a percentage of the royalties of successful patents at a progressively increasing rate, reaching perhaps a maximum of 33⅓ per cent. In any case I wish to point out that it is opposed to all the logic of individualism to recognize a right without claiming a right in return; that this applies as well to the others who constitute the public as to the private individual; and that it is in the highest degree illogical to suppose that individualism stands for the blind conservation of existing institutions.



of the supposed right of every man to a living. This is the poor man's claim. The rich man makes the same claim, in more elegant form, in "the right of private enterprise." The meaning of this is that no group of people constituting a municipality or a state may properly undertake to provide their own gas, water, electric light, or street-railways as long as private individuals or corporations stand ready to supply the need and make a profit out of it. It should be said that the right of private enterprise is rather distinctively American. It would hardly occur to a European, and especially a Continental, municipality that it ought to pay a private individual for doing what it could better do for itself. Nor could the obligation be justified on principles of natural rights. If I join a number of others in a club to buy coal from the mine, the local dealer will no doubt complain; but his only justification would be that, all things considered — convenience as well as price — we should act more intelligently in buying our coal from him. So of the local trade in general as against the mail-order house. If the local dealer is correct in his calculations, he may justly consider himself wronged. But on any other grounds he has no rights in the matter, for he is not the most intelligent distributor.

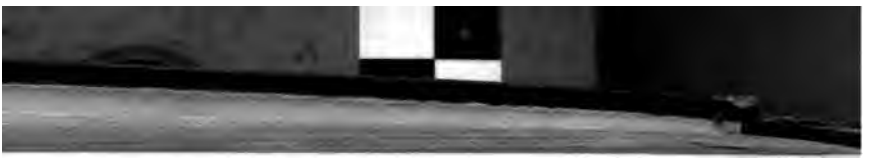
Hence the right of private enterprise, like all other rights, is a question of intelligence. But not, once again, of social recognition. For there may very well be cases where, even as against the state, the private *entrepreneur* can better fill the need. And, such being the case, the state has no more right to play the fool than the private individual. No right of the state lies merely in its greater power. Every one has the right to expect that the action of every other will rest upon rational ground, — rational, of course, from the stand-


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

point of the other in question. The individual has the right to claim this from the state. If, therefore, it could be clearly shown that the public management of a given enterprise were less intelligent (all things considered) than that of a private *entrepreneur* whose offer had been declined, the latter could quite justly claim to have been deprived of his rights. And where no basis of comparison is afforded — because of the forcible elimination of private competition, or the loose methods of public accounting, or the necessarily monopolistic character of the undertaking in question — the right of private enterprise has still a color of justification.

§ 140. The argument against the theory of individual rights reduces itself to two general heads: first, the theoretical argument of the priority of the state, which we have already considered; secondly, the practical argument to the effect that individualism has been tried and found wanting. But has individualism really been tried? I think there could be no greater error than this. If we ask for the chief point of defect we shall be told that it permits the formation and conservation of great masses of irresponsible wealth. Yet if we examine the sources of such wealth we shall find that most of it is the outcome, not of natural right, but of artificial privilege illogically granted and carelessly guarded. First, there is our patent-system.[5] To this I might add our recognition of a nearly absolute right of determining the disposition of property by will and testament; for which the theory of rights furnishes only a partial justification. But by far the most prolific source of irresponsible wealth is the stock-corporation, which rests upon the special privilege of limited individual liability, and to which an unfortunate legal

[5] See p. 248, note.



fiction grants the rights of a natural person. It may be easily shown that this single privilege, the privilege of limited liability, is directly or indirectly the source of most of our swollen fortunes, and at the same time the source of their irresponsibility. It is this privilege that renders the combination of capital possible. On the basis of personal honor and individual responsibility it would be out of the question, under present cultural conditions, to form a commercial organization representing any considerable number of persons. And under conditions which would permit such an organization it would have a very different moral character. But when the organization is formed it becomes an instrument by which one man is enabled to control a vast body of capital for personal profit. Probably most of the larger fortunes have been made with other persons' money. Quite apart from this the effect of the corporation is to release the individual from personal responsibility. Personal responsibility presupposes, we have seen, a social, and at the same time a personal, relation. But the effect of the corporation is to interpose a barrier between the acting individual and the public of such a character as to diminish, not only his legal responsibility, but his psychological sense of responsibility, if not also his actual moral responsibility.[6]

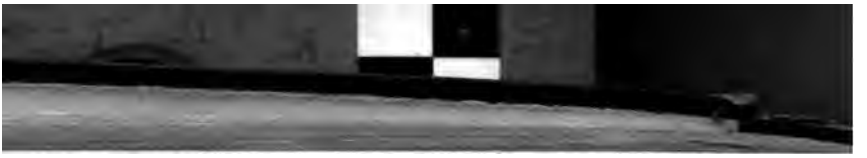
According to the view offered here, rights belong

[6] Judging from the state of the public mind it would seem, at first glance, to make no difference whether we speak of "The Standard Oil Company" or of "John D. Rockefeller." But a moment's reflection will show that the fact of the Standard Oil Company makes a vast difference: first, in the amount of Mr. Rockefeller's accumulations, present and past; secondly, in his relations to those who are constructively his customers; and thirdly, perhaps, in his actual moral obligations to them and to the public. A purchase of oil from Mr. Rockefeller, citizen and dispenser, would be a very different affair.


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

only to persons, and in the measure of their personality and intelligence. In our Second Lecture we have considered the possibility of group-persons. And therefore I am not prepared to say that a corporation engaged in commercial enterprise might not under certain conditions constitute a true personality with genuine personal rights. At present these conditions are almost totally lacking. A person, we may remember, is constituted by the relation of multiplicity in unity. An activity is personal so far as each phase of it includes and is illumined by the ideas and aims of every other phase. A man is a person so far as there is a mutual understanding between the various aspects of himself. And a group is a person so far as there is such mutual understanding, in all the aspects of their personal lives, between its several members. It is this relation that constitutes the difference between a person and a machine; a machine is moved at any moment solely by the present force and is illumined by nothing. This, moreover, is the relation that makes a person a responsible agent capable of considering the demands of his physical and social environment, — which, again, is the foundation of his personal rights. An individual may claim the right to conduct his business according to his own judgment, just because, and just in so far as, he is not a mere machine for making money, but a human person, a father of family, a brother, or friend, or what not, interested in various objects and capable of understanding the various demands of his situation. If a corporation should fulfil the same condition, it might then — but not otherwise — be regarded as a person, entitled to personal rights.

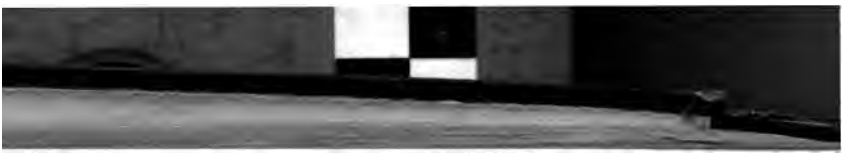
Now it is quite obvious that of all associations of men within our experience the railway or commercial



corporation, as at present organized, is the farthest from meeting this description. The corporation represents, not a concretely personal aim, but the most abstract of all aims, namely, dividends. If you buy shares of stock in an art museum or a symphony orchestra it is because you are interested in art or music; and in buying shares you give to the concrete ends of the enterprise the stamp of your personal approval. But you practically never buy railroad-stock because you are interested in the problem of transportation. This may, indeed, be the chief interest of some of the officers of the road. And the road itself may be a splendid technological achievement. From an esthetic standpoint this may also appeal to you. But in the end the motives which chiefly determine the buying of shares — and which would determine you or me — are the investment-motives, namely, security and rate of anticipated dividend. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that a stock-corporation in the commercial world is a machine for grinding out dividends. It could hardly be more of a machine if it were made of steel or wood. Like every other machine it represents an abstract motive forcibly detached from other motives and sent out to operate alone; and when once set in operation its course is fatally determined. It is true that intelligence is required for its operation; but this intelligence is limited in its legitimate exercise to the task of keeping the machine in its predetermined course; it can never by any means assume to reconstruct the end, — not even to entertain considerations that would appeal to every individual shareholder. In a word, then, the corporation is by its very nature, as well as by the deliberate intention of its construction, impersonal, unresponsive, and irresponsible.


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

So far as this is true it can have no natural rights, — that is to say, none of those rights which belong by nature to intelligent and responsible agents. From the standpoint of individualism the *status* of the corporation before the state is very different from that of the individual person. The latter may quite properly urge that his ends, as self-conscious ends, have a value in themselves, a value which it is for others to appreciate. And as an intelligent and responsible agent he may claim to have a worth for all others who will come to terms with him. The corporation is an end only for others. In itself it stands for no value whatever. And when it appears with a claim for personal rights it has very commonly left its responsibility at home. The others for whom it is supposed to stand are by special convention excused from appearing. Hence, on principles purely individualistic, where the individual may expect to be free, the corporation should be strictly controlled. It may be compelled, for example, to submit to an examination of its accounts, and other similar regulations, to have its profits limited, its scope of operation prescribed, or even its life terminated, if required by public policy, — any of which measures as applied to a private individual would be tyrannical and absurd. In practice, of course, the imposition of restrictions would be to some degree complicated by a consideration of the rights of share-holders, more or less validated by previous recognition, — how far I cannot undertake to say. But under the changing conditions few institutions can maintain themselves without a constant extension of privilege. And in any case the point of the matter lies in the presupposition with which the consideration of a claim should be approached. In the case of an individual person the presupposition



is in favor of freedom; in the case of the corporation, for control.[7] And in the shaping of institutions it is the presupposition that counts.

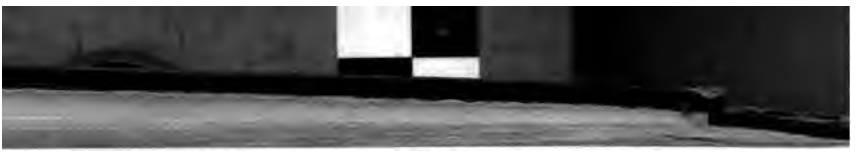
In the light of this analysis it seems to me that the practical argument against individualism falls to the ground. Irresponsible wealth is the outcome, not of individual rights, but chiefly of uncontrolled corporate privilege. And the argument applies, not to individualism, but to that pseudo-individualism which, by a legal fiction, treats a corporation as a person. From any psychological standpoint this is the most violent of all fictions. And it has been most unfortunate in confusing the issue for the popular mind. For I have no doubt that when the assertion is made that the individual is the product of the state, it is commonly with the corporate individual chiefly in mind. The corporate individual is indeed the product of the state, — created by special privilege. The personal individual is the product of his own self-consciousness. No state can, by legislative enactment, create a Shakespeare or a Napoleon, or for that matter you or me. And whatever character it proposes to give us, we, becoming self-conscious, may set aside. But it lies fully in the power of the state to decide whether, and on what terms, a corporation shall be formed to run a railway from A to B. And where it confers a special privilege it may very properly exercise a special control.

§ 141. These illustrations will, I hope, make it clear in what sense I stand for the doctrine of "natural rights" and "the social contract." As I have pointed out before, the terms "nature" and "natural" have

[7] Personally, the cry of an individual that he must have bread appeals to me as *prima facie* reasonable, but when a corporation claims that, in any case, it *must* earn dividends, I can only ask, Why?


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

two rather opposed uses. As applied to man they may refer to what he was by original mechanical constitution or to what he is capable of becoming through culture and development, — to what he actually is, or was, or to what he is good for. No doubt in a final philosophy the two meanings must be coordinated. But in the meantime they should not be confused. And when Professor Dewey teaches that the individual is inherently interested in the good of others, or Rousseau that he was created a free agent, the first meaning of nature is predominant. And this is also, in part, the meaning of Aristotle when he says that man is by nature a social animal; he is social because of his mechanical constitution. Now, in this sense, I hold that, on the contrary, man is "by nature" neither social nor individual; that by nature he is not a person, but only a savage and a brute, and as such entitled to no rights whatever. But if you hold with me that the most significant thing about man is the fact that he is self-conscious, and not only acts, as other things do, but acts knowingly; and if you will remember that this fact is of such proportions in the case of man as to overshadow his similarity to the rest, not only of the physical, but of the animal world; then I think you will agree with me in saying that his true nature is indicated in the expression of himself as a conscious and intelligent agent. Only, then you will say that his nature is most truly expressed, not in the unreflective "innocence and simplicity" of the child or the primitive man, but in the most perfect developments of culture and sophisticated intelligence. And it is in this sense that I stand for the natural right of the individual to pursue his personal ends, — not as a right inherited from an original endowment, but as a right won by the development of creative intelligence.

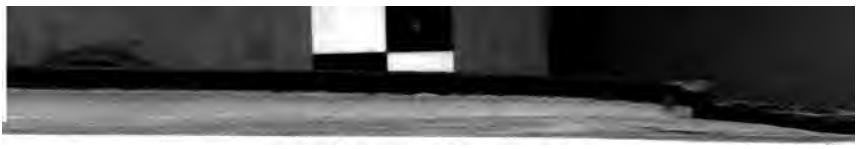


And in this sense, however transformed, I think I am true to the underlying motive of the doctrine of natural rights. For the meaning of this doctrine, though doubtful on the positive side, was clear on the negative. It affirmed that at any rate the rights of the individual were *not* conferred by the state, *not* by an external agency. And this I also affirm. The right of the individual to pursue his own ends is the creation of his own intelligence. And in this sense it is determined by the nature of the man.

§ 142. And so of the "social contract." This conception has created a vast amount of contemptuous amusement among latter-day political philosophers. Yet I think there is none other that so truly expresses the nature of our social obligations. As a historical explanation of the formation of society it is absurd enough. As such it has probably never been seriously advanced. But as the expression of the *meaning* of any recognized social order it seems to me admirably accurate and just. And it must be remembered that social order is a question of meaning. As I have pointed out, the distinctively social relation is a conscious relation, a relation of mutual understanding. It is not constituted by mere spatial proximity. But this mutual understanding is by its very nature a contract. Assume that A depends upon the action of B; that B knows this; that A knows that B knows this; that B, again, knows that A knows that he knows. There you have the essential features of a contract, expressed in law as the "meeting of minds." This meeting of minds is the one fact that binds men together into a state; for no far-reaching obligation is involved in the mere exercise of force. And it may be said that as the citizens of a state advance in intelligence the law becomes less


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

of a police power for the enforcement of order and ever more distinctly the authoritative statement of the terms of a mutual agreement. For this reason I hold that the social relations of self-conscious beings constitute in the most literal sense a contract. And it seems to me that there is moral gain in recognizing this interpretation. As a motive for paying one's taxes "the good of others" or "the common welfare" presents, to me at least, a very opaque and doubtful obligation. But the notion of fulfilling contractual obligations which one has assumed by participating in the benefits of taxation constitutes for any honorable and intelligent man a very strong motive. It also serves the further and not less important purpose of defining the extent of the obligation, and of enabling a man, in declaring the value of his property, to distinguish, by reference to the valuations offered by others of their own property, what is genuinely and justly obligatory from what is sentimental and quixotic.



II The Conception of Intelligence

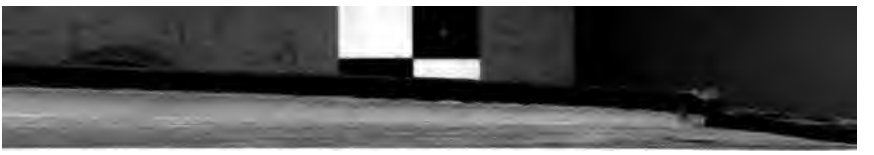
The foregoing will serve as a convenient general statement. But in such a statement a number of points are left unavoidably obscure, and I shall undertake now to deal with some of them, even at the cost of some repetition, in the form of answers to a chain of objections, leading finally to a further analysis of the conception of intelligence.

§ 143. The first question is, What is the practical meaning of a right not yet guaranteed by law? In what sense may it be said to exist? My answer will be that it exists already in so far as the right is intelligently conceived by the individual asserting it. In other words, it exists in the same sense that any true idea exists which has been conceived by an intelligent person, and it has all the practical meaning possessed by any such true idea. It is utterly false to say that a right has no meaning except as enforced by the police. Such a position is self-destructive from its own "social" point of view; for if the police power is the sole guarantee of a right, it is also the sole guarantee of an obligation; and in that case the individual citizen would not be morally accountable for any closer observance of law than the vigilance of the state should in each particular case be able to enforce. It must not be forgotten that the whole question of rights is, whatever its other aspects, a moral question. The obligation to obey the law rests upon the intelligence it may be assumed to represent. But this intelligence establishes also a moral ground for demanding, and at the same time a practical ground for expecting, the consideration of an intelligently formulated demand. Thus of the right


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

of women to vote. If you ask on what basis a woman may claim a right not yet authoritatively recognized, she may reply, On the basis of reason; that is to say, on the assumption that her claim is intelligently conceived and addressed to intelligent beings. And if the women can show that the present agitation is the expression of a genuinely awakened self-consciousness, and of an intelligent grasp of their position in the state, with its correlated rights and responsibilities — what as yet there is some ground to doubt — then, on the assumption that the men to whom they speak are rational beings, their claim has nearly the practical significance that it would have if already recognized by law. And on any other assumption it is useless to *claim* anything whatever.

§ 144. Does this involve the admission that a right is of no practical significance unless recognized by society? By no means. Remember Galileo. His assertion that the earth moved was true for him before it was accepted by others; and because it was so certainly true for him he was bound to secure its acceptance. So of any right once clearly conceived. To make use of a different illustration, — I have before me a number of boards from which I propose to construct a box. As against the boards I claim the right to construct the box because I know how to do it; and my right is in no wise dependent upon their recognition. If they were self-conscious beings and knew what they were good for, they could lighten my labor, enlarge my rights and at the same time realize their own. In the meantime the practical advantage lies with the being who knows. The same holds as between the different members of human society. To the more intelligent man the less intelligent is, relatively speaking, plastic material.



And nothing is clearer than that, barring sudden death or other accident, the man who really knows what he wants is bound to get it, law or no law, recognition or no recognition; or rather, if recognition be absolutely necessary, he will compel it.

§ 145. Here, however, I have raised another question. For what has just been said may seem to be an endorsement of just those classes of men whose actions have cast the largest doubt upon the theory of individual rights,—for example, the monopolist (as we may conveniently name him) who has gained his millions in disregard of law, justice, and common honesty, and the political boss who has reached a position of wealth, power, and public trust through systematic corruption. Are we to say that such men have a right to what they get because they know how to get it?

To my mind this question is capable of a perfectly definite answer, though not in terms of simple Yes or No. I must ask you to remember, first that I do not uphold a man's right to get anything that he may want, but only what he wants intelligently; and secondly, that his right is proportional to the measure of his intelligence. Now, if you will place your monopolist in a group of monopolists, all seeking monopoly by the same means as he, and if you place your unscrupulous politician similarly in a group of his kind, then I shall say that, under these conditions, the successful player of the game, whatever it may be, has a right to all that he gets. And if you pause to reflect for a moment you will see that our assumption is not so very far from the actual situation. The great oil monopoly was won in a game of monopoly, and in an economic situation dominated by the idea of *laissez faire*. And with regard to the political illustration it will be sufficient to repeat,


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

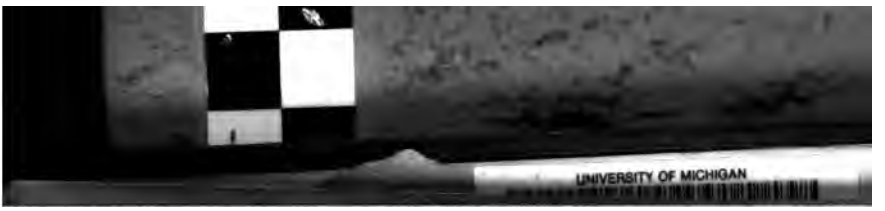
as a rough expression of the truth, the often quoted statement that every people gets the government that it deserves. This involves, no doubt, a painful admission. The common assumption is that we Americans are an extraordinarily intelligent people. But if we were such *as a people*, it is hard to see why we should now be so conspicuous among the great nations of the world for municipal corruption and mismanagement, and for national helplessness before the power of incorporated wealth. As a matter of fact the really popular mind of the country is still dominated by the stupid "spoils-system" point of view. We believe, in a way, that "public office is a public trust," but the nicer obligations of a public trust are often very imperfectly comprehended even by those who rank high for intelligence, while to the common mind it seems quite natural and right that public trust should confer a certain privilege of private "graft," at least to the extent of doing favors for one's friends. And therefore I think we are compelled to say that the right of the monopolist or the political boss to what he gets is still largely justified by the state of popular intelligence. Nor should it be forgotten that, under the present conditions, each of these more or less fulfils the responsibilities of his position. For example, to the broader but not perfectly discriminating view of the political reformer the typical aldermanic boss is simply an enemy of society; but to his constituents he may be, as Miss Addams has beautifully shown,[8] a large-hearted, benevolent man, securing work for them when unemployed, and paying the lawyer, doctor, or undertaker when they are in trouble; and quite probably this is the character he gives to himself. In all this

[8] "Ethical Survivals in Municipal Corruption," *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. VIII, No. 3.



he certainly performs a social function, however unintelligently. And within his own ward he is probably entitled to leadership, on the ground that, as compared with his followers, he is the more responsible agent.

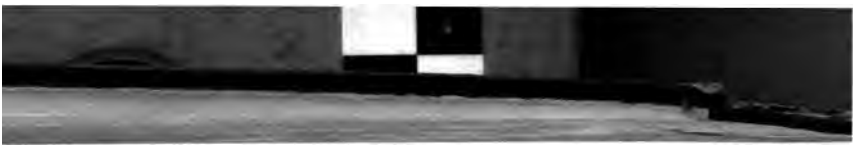
But now if you ask if *we* — the intelligent persons who are here discussing the question of natural rights — shall recognize the rights of predatory wealth and machine politics, of course I shall answer, No. But this answer will involve certain assumptions. In the first place, we shall deny that the striving for wealth and power can be regarded as in itself an intelligent impulse. To our view the man who strives for wealth with no notion of what to do with wealth, and no interest in the technology of the industrial or distributive process by which wealth is gained, or the man who strives for political power with no conception of, or interest in, constructive statesmanship, — such a man is, so far, not an intelligent agent, but the victim rather of a blind passion which drives him he knows not whither. Probably few or none of those under consideration realize the extremity of the type. The popular conception is probably a personified abstraction, like the old-time conception of the "miser." Still, it seems possible to find men who are incapable of any serious occupation outside of the stock-market and whose leisure must be devoted to gaming. On the other hand some of those most conspicuous for the unscrupulous acquisition of wealth have shown a high intelligence in their disposition of it. Shall we not say that, after the fact at least, they have so far justified their right? Not, however, because of the specifically public character of their activities, but because they have shown the essentially intelligent capacity of realizing the value of the opportunities placed in their hands. In other words, I should


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

place their right upon the same basis as that of the intelligent youth to enter the state-university as compared with the absence of such right on the part of the unintelligent.

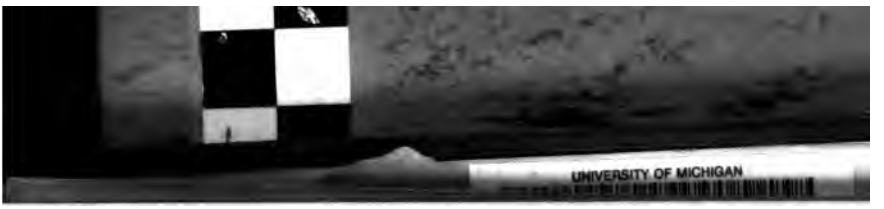
But what of the seekers after wealth and power who show no intelligence? Of these we shall say — in the second place — that they shall not be permitted to play their game of acquisition with us. Thereby, indeed, we assume a serious responsibility. For, first, we assert our present ability to beat them at their own game; and secondly, we announce our intention of bringing about such a reorganization of the social order that their game will be outlawed and a better game substituted, in which those who win (and all may win) shall be compelled to prove their intelligence and at the same time justify our own. It may be that we are assuming too much. The assumption is none the less imposed upon us so far as we claim the rights of intelligent agents. For — be the results to us what they may — the only logical ground upon which we may question a claim is that it could not survive criticism in a society composed of persons as intelligent as ourselves; and if we doubt the sufficiency of our intelligence for securing a reform we must in all consistency admit that those who win under the *status quo* do so by virtue of a right superior to our own.

§ 146. But it may be that, in attempting to remove an objection, I have only raised it again in more fundamental form. What has just been said amounts to an identification of the superior intelligence both with superior ability and with superior moral worth. The man of intelligence is the serious and capable man who is aiming at constructive results. Now there is undoubtedly a certain tendency among men, which we



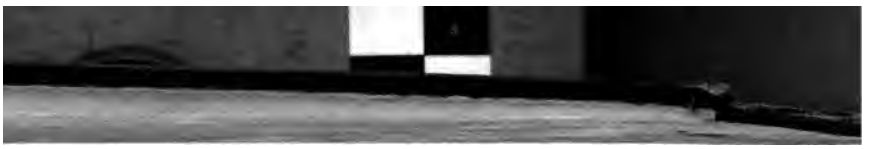
have noted in another connection, to regard intelligence and morality as more or less at variance. And in particular is it true that, in all ages, from the primitive beginnings of Greek and Hebrew thought up to and including the present day, it has been the custom of men to attribute the superior intelligence to those skilled in trickery and deceit. By the same token honesty is assumed to involve a suggestion of stupidity, *i.e.*, "simplicity." Nowhere is this tendency more in evidence than in our own country. It is hardly too much to say that our national habit of thought, certainly our national habit of speech, is to treat the whole social and economic process as one grand game of poker, in which the honors pass to the most plausible "bluffer" by virtue of his superior cunning and "nerve." And therefore we are disposed to pay high honor for intelligence (though not, as we conceive, for virtue) to those who attain to political or economic success through devious methods, — through secret freight-rebates and the like, ingenious evasions of the law, political deals, and specious party-platforms designed to outwit the voter. To the popular mind such activities stand for sagacity, and it is on the ground of superior sagacity that the winners claim a natural right. It is felt, moreover, that the players in this game show a superior sense of the realities, in comparison with which the activities of constructive thought are more of the nature of a dream. And so the question confronts us: on what ground — by what final test of intelligence — may we assert that the intelligence of the clever rascal is intelligence of a low degree?

The answer to this question has been given by implication in our Second Lecture, in which we formulated a definition of consciousness and distinguished the degrees


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

of consciousness. For "intelligence" is, in last analysis, simply a higher degree of consciousness. No doubt we tend to think of it as a sort of abstract consciousness, a mode of consciousness devoid of feeling for concrete values and things. But on the other hand an intelligence which were unaware of its own abstractness, and which mistook its own abstractions for concrete things, would be simply unintelligent; and an intelligence which recognized the distinction would not be thus narrowly limited. But in the higher degree of consciousness there is nothing unique, — no factor which is not in some measure characteristic of the lowest. To be intelligent is only to be more keenly conscious. Now, as we have seen, a man is in general more conscious to the extent that he grasps all-at-once, in a systematic unity, a greater range of detail with a correspondingly finer degree of discrimination. And the fineness of discrimination is strictly correlative to the comprehensiveness of what is embraced in the unitary point of view. And so our test of intelligence would be: breadth of vision (in a coherent view), fineness and keenness of insight. We may call that man more intelligent who sees farther and more deeply, and at the same time more accurately.

I have spoken of intelligence as creative. Every higher reach of intelligence is an act of creation. But on the other hand every creative act is the expression of a higher reach of intelligence, or, as we say, of a new idea. How the new idea comes into being we need not pause to ask. The point is that it represents, when born, just what I have defined as a higher degree of intelligence. James Watt observing the tea-kettle, Newton observing the apple (if we accept the familiar tales) saw not only what others had seen, but more. They surveyed the



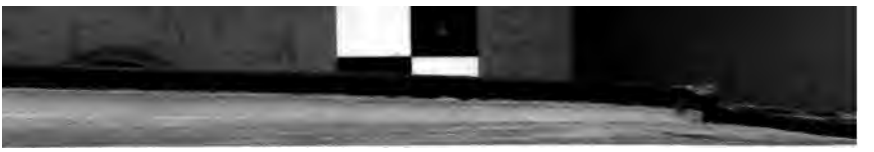
object before them more accurately, analyzed it more keenly, and at the same time brought it into systematic relations both with a broader range of present fact and with new facts which were the fruit of their thinking.

Let us apply our criterion to the special matter before us. And first let us remember that the question is not of the intelligence of the successful schemer as compared with that of the man who loses at the same game, but of the former as compared with the man of serious and constructive purpose. Place, for example, such a device as the secret rebate side by side with any of the great modern inventions, — the steam-engine, the electric telegraph and telephone, the electric light and motor, the newspaper-press and the type-setting machine; and then think of these in all their present perfection. Or place it beside the commercial competition that wins through scientific improvements in the machinery of production, or carefully conceived economies in handling the product, or a juster and more comprehensive appreciation of its uses. In the light of this comparison rebating almost vanishes as an intellectual achievement. It implies no extensive grasp of the commercial situation, no special keenness of insight. As a mode of doing your neighbor it is nearly as obvious as picking pockets. We speak of course after the fact, yet even after the fact the great inventions I have mentioned continue to stand, with their parallels in the economic and political world, as the expression of ideas, as the discoveries of men who were more perfectly conscious than their contemporaries both of the realities and of the possibilities of the world before them. And by a similar comparison we may see, I think, that it is no sign of intelligence to twist the meaning of the law. Your small boy will show himself a master of


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

legal sophistry and baffle all your efforts to state your instructions unequivocally. But it is a task of real intelligence, involving an extensive range of imagination and a nice sense of meanings, to state a law with logical clearness and consistency, or to derive consistency and clearness of intention from a law badly stated.

§ 147. It may still be claimed, however, that as a matter of fact many of those who have been markedly successful in "predatory" activities have shown themselves to be peculiarly far-sighted. If this is true, I reply, then, so far as it is true, they have justified their position. It is not inconceivable, indeed, that the verdict of history upon the trust-builders of our time may be that they have justified their profits by demonstrating the possibilities of economic organization. In any case it should be remembered that a far-sighted greed is very different in character from a blind greed. (The meaning of a noun is never independent of its qualifying adjective.) If an impulse is far-sighted, then, so far, it is bound to reach something worth while, both from the standpoint of the agent and of those related to him. And here, as elsewhere, the nature of the original motive makes no difference if there be intelligence in its elaboration. For example, it will make no difference whether you set out to confirm a theory or to refute it. If you will only proceed to refute it with scientific and artistic completeness, you will find yourself, in the very process, acquiring and appropriating a view of your own, which will then constitute a positive contribution to the subject. So in practical life. It is possible to find men whose intelligence has expanded through a persistent study of the tricks of the trade and who, as the result of a broadening of view, even along these lines, have developed into something like con-



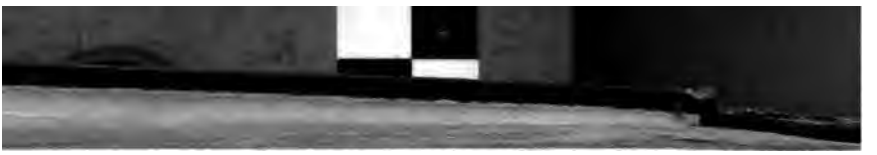
structive economists. And men have graduated from small politics into statesmanship through nothing but an intelligent appreciation of the worth for themselves of power dishonestly acquired.

Breadth of vision, keenness of insight, — these qualities express themselves in various forms; in industry by technological excellence, in art by comprehensiveness and subtlety of suggestion, in science by order, precision, and completeness. But all these are but different ways of saying that the activity expresses an idea; or, in other words, that it is a thoughtfully self-conscious activity. And in our estimation of men and the rights that we are to accord to them this is the final test. Is the life of the man a bare mechanical fact or is it an activity permeated through and through, and made luminous, living, and personal, by consciousness? If the latter, it is in itself the very source and essence of value, dignity, and right; and it remains only for us to enhance its value by getting our value out of it.

§ 148. You will not have failed to note that the criterion of intelligence here proposed is distinctly academic. But such, indeed, is my purpose, — to show that knowledge and intelligence, in the sense, if you will, of academic intelligence, is the final reality of value, of morality, of life itself. And thus my theory of social rights is in one respect merely a re-affirmation of the ancient theory of Plato and Aristotle, according to whom political and social rights belonged only to the wise, and in particular to the philosopher and the sage. But where Plato and Aristotle treated wisdom, and especially the higher order of wisdom, as something essentially remote from active life, I have endeavored to show that wisdom — self-consciousness — is just that which transforms any mechanical movement into real


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

life. And therefore I hold that the academic conception of intelligence, when clearly stated and divested of its accidental features, is of universal significance. And further that, in spite of the apparent divergence, it expresses the real intention of the vulgar, or popular, notion. Take those who have a special admiration of political cunning; would they concede the object of their admiration to be lacking in breadth or depth of vision? On the contrary their special claim would be that he is "far-sighted" and "long-headed"; and the only matter in dispute is whether he is really far-sighted. Moreover — again in spite of an apparent opposition — the popular admiration of the clever man is at bottom a tribute to his virtue. A favorite illustration for contemporary moralizing is Mr. Rockefeller. In reading Miss Tarbell's account of the Standard Oil Company in McClure's Magazine it seemed to me that, after each illustration introduced to show that he is relentless and unscrupulous, she paused to dwell in admiration upon his superhuman intelligence. What is the logic of such a recital, for us, for Miss Tarbell, or for the popular mind? Surely I think the question must immediately arise, however vaguely formulated, How can a man of such extraordinary intelligence be in moral perception so utterly obtuse? And is he obtuse? May there not be in his economic far-sightedness a depth and range of moral vision which we utterly fail to suspect? In any case he is either less intelligent than we suppose or a man of more serious moral purpose, and the question is, Which? I shall not attempt to answer this question. I shall say only that, in spite of the traditional attribution of wisdom to the serpent, it expresses the inevitable logic of the human mind, the uncultivated or the cultivated,



in the matter of intelligence and virtue. In last analysis the man who knows best must know best what is good.

§ 149. As a further point we may note that the conception of intelligence, and of the superior rights of intelligence, expresses also what is at bottom the intention of the popular conceptions of rights. The point is illustrated by the notion of "fair competition." "Fair competition" is competition along lines of technological excellence. No grown man would venture to complain of a competitor because he had won by offering better goods or goods at lower prices, — made possible by more economical methods of manufacture and handling. Nor could he offer any rational ground upon which the successful competitor would be justified in setting a voluntary limit to his competition, —*i.e.*, to give the inferior competitor "a share of the trade." I think it would be commonly recognized that the really inferior competitor has no rational claim to a share of the trade. Nor, under the conditions as stated, is it just to the purchasing public that he should have a share. To give him a share arbitrarily is like making a deliberately false move at a game of chess that your opponent may win, — thus making the game a stupid and unprofitable occupation for all concerned. The feeling of common sense is that the winner by technological excellence has every right to win; and further that it is to every one's interest that he should be the winner. The competition of which we hear so much complaint, and which has made "the competitive system" a term of reproach, is not of this sort, but that which wins through lying advertisements or adulteration of goods, or which seeks, perhaps, by sundry political or corporate devices, to destroy competition altogether and to reign alone, not as the


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

technologically most efficient producer or distributor, but as the strongest financial or political power.

§ 150. And finally we should note that, also in the more personal relations, and here especially, we do as a matter of fact, and almost as a matter of instinct, recognize the dignity and the independent rights of those who know. Think, for example, of your child. If you are a sensible parent it will be true that no nonsense about the inborn rights or the essential rationality of children has prevented you from dictating what he was to do. But some day or other you discover, to your surprise perhaps, that his resentment of dictation is no longer a mere animal impatience of restraint but a more or less intelligent assertion of personal responsibility. And then I think you will leave him with the consciousness of having offered a just ground for offense. In this you recognize that a new personality has appeared in the family, no longer to be merely directed, but more or less to be reasoned with and consulted; and that so far as he is really responsible and knows what he is doing he has the right to act upon his own responsibility. Or take your servant. Surely it would seem that a servant is there to do what he is told in the way that you prescribe. But not so a servant who knows his business. And not merely because you fear to lose him, but because also, on moral grounds, you are compelled to recognize in him, as a responsible person, a free agent who as such is an end among the other family ends, and has the right, while fulfilling his obligations to you, to satisfy his own sense of what is rational and right.[9]

[9] Popular notions of responsibility may lead us to forget that a responsible agent must as such be a free agent, and important in his own right. The common definition of a responsible agent is, one who may be relied upon to respond in a given way to a given stimulus. But really the only



III Individualism and Socialism

We have now to turn our thesis over and consider it briefly as it appears from another side, — after which I shall bring these lectures to a close with some conclusions regarding the logic of the social problem. Every social theory which has deserved the name of theory may be said to have been an attempt to solve the problem of order and freedom, or at least to define the relation between these two necessities of social life. Yet at the same time nearly all thought upon the subject has rested upon a presupposition which would make the problem theoretically insoluble, — the assumption, namely, of a fundamental contradiction between individual freedom and social order. Consequently, though many have thought that (in a divinely ordered universe) there ought to be no such contradiction, few have ventured to assert that the contradiction may actually be removed. Hence, most schools of social theory have represented a compromise between these two ends and at the same time a preference for one end or the other. Individualism is the name applied to the theories which emphasize the demands of freedom; while socialism, in its broadest sense, stands first of all for organization and unity.

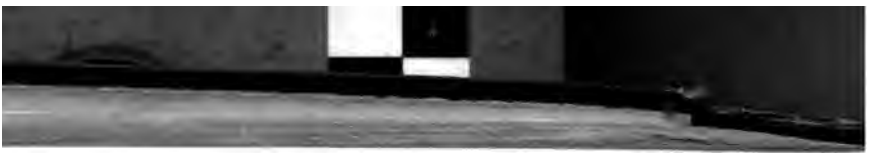
§ 151. The older conception of natural rights was in

things that may be trusted to act in this way are the machines. When you entrust your affairs to a responsible agent you do not expect him to act in any fatally prescribed way. You may discuss the possibilities with him and give him elaborate and detailed instructions. But when you finally commit the matter to his responsibility what you expect is, not a prescribed result, but simply that his action, whatever it may be, will, after the fact, commend itself to you as reasonable and right.


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

this sense individualistic. Its most significant phrases were: "*laissez faire*" and "that government is best which governs least." The latter has until recently been almost an axiom for our American thought, and the doctrine has received its most thorough application in our American life. Yet the disciples of the "let alone" theory were by no means in favor of anarchy. If you had asked an American of the old school how freedom could be consistent with order and industrial efficiency, I suppose he would have replied, with us, that liberty-loving people were as such intelligent people and that intelligent people were, because they were intelligent, orderly and efficient. But the theory of natural rights which he had adopted never taught that order was something *to be won* by the exercise of intelligence, something that absolutely *depended upon* the intelligent study of social relations. Rather was it something provided for from the beginning by "the wisdom of Nature." In other words, Nature had ordained that if each would attend to his own affairs all should be well in the body politic.

I need not undertake to describe in detail the process by which this view has been discredited. It will be sufficient to point to the radical change in social conditions which has come about merely through the mechanical inventions of the last century. To these, in large measure, we attribute the rapid growth of cities, the enlargement of the scope of the individual industrial enterprise and the extension of its field of distribution. The numerous difficulties presented by these changes have shown quite clearly that "Nature" will not take care of the body politic. And so from a firm belief in the doctrine that the best government governs least we are coming to a rather general feeling



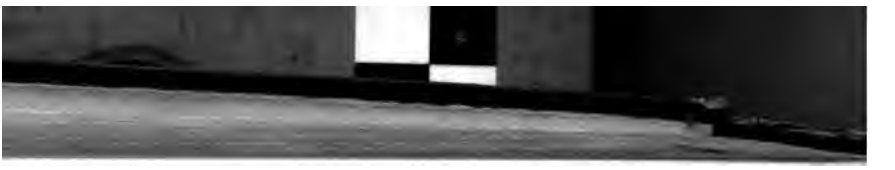
that any government of the future must assume a pretty wide responsibility, if not to the socialistic doctrine that the best government governs everything. In the United States the change of view has been slow in coming; but just now the air is full of plans for enlarging the scope of government, to some of which we are already committed. But what is most interesting from our point of view is the parallel change in public sentiment regarding the importance of freedom. The Declaration of Independence has been relegated to the place of an interesting historical document. It has given place within the last ten years to manifestoes both imperialistic and socialistic. And there have not been wanting orators to tell us that a "land of freedom" is a fool's paradise. All this of course is only another expression of the prevailing exaggeration of the social; and what is implied in it is a fundamental contradiction between social order and individual freedom.

§ 152. According to the view of these lectures, now many times repeated, such a contradiction is by no means necessary either in logic or in fact. Between freedom and order there is no contradiction in idea; at most a contradiction in fact; in idea, however, there is an absolute mutual implication. We must admit that individual aims, as at present formulated, do in fact conflict; and perhaps to some degree this may ever be true. But this occurs only so far as the individuals in question are lacking in self-consciousness and know not what they are doing or what they plan to do. So far as they know anything they are bound to know each other, and the necessary result of this mutual knowing is to bring about a mutual adjustment of activities — a social organization — whereby each may gain from the other and at the same time open and pave the way,


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

each for the other, for the satisfaction of *individual* ends. This enlargement of individual opportunity is freedom. And the opportunity offered by social organization is the only mode of arriving at any considerable degree of freedom. It is true that a certain degree is attained by the isolated individual through the mere control of nature; but by far the richer opportunity, even of controlling nature, lies in coming to terms with his fellow-men. But if there is no contradiction between order and freedom there is of course none between the theory of natural rights and the theory of socialism, — *if by socialism we mean simply that view which stands for a thoroughly comprehensive organization of society.* Rather is a believer in natural rights in logic bound to make comprehensiveness of organization his direct and constant aim; for in each extension of the social organization he will expect to find an increased opportunity for the satisfaction of his own ends.

§ 153. I hope it will be clear that, in no artificial or Pickwickian sense of freedom is this statement made. We say that a body is "free to move" in a given direction, or in any direction, when no other body lies in its path. Freedom in this sense might be called mechanical freedom. But you will see at once that the phrase involves a contradiction in terms. How can a body be either "free" or "restrained" which neither wants anything nor cares what happens? The freedom of a free *body* is a surviving anthropomorphism of a supposedly impersonal science. The only real freedom — the only sense in which any one has ever cared whether he was free or bound — is freedom to do as you please, — in other words, freedom of choice; and this, of course, implies a being who chooses and may be pleased or displeased. But freedom in this sense calls



for a very different set of conditions from those required for mere freedom of movement. Freedom of choice demands, not that the world about you be empty; since in an empty world there is nothing to choose; but rather that it be various and full. And the measure of such freedom is that of the possible range of choice. In a word, then, where the freedom of a merely moving body is a question only of a clear field of movement, the freedom of a consciously choosing agent is a question of breadth of opportunity, — which, as you will readily see, is quite another story.

I feel it necessary to emphasize this distinction because of the persistent illusion to the effect that the life of more primitive times was somehow gloriously happy and free. In our own country it takes the form of dwelling regretfully upon the times of the pioneers. We obtain this impression, like so many others, by studying our pioneer as an external and merely mechanical fact and leaving the inward and spiritual out of the account. Viewed as a mechanical fact the pioneer was indeed free; but his freedom meant nothing more than this, that no forethought was necessary to avoid a collision with his neighbor. In every other respect his life was narrowly determined. Not only his choice of books, pictures, and music — the constant labor involved in securing the necessities of life left little room for thoughts of these — but his choice of friends, of wife, of occupation, of education for his children, — for that matter, of what to eat, drink, and wear, — along every line his life was rigidly determined. And I believe that if, with our view of these conditions, we could combine a view of the general character of the pioneer mind, we should be inclined to re-echo Hobbes' statement that, apart from society, the life of man is "solitary, poor, nasty,


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

brutish," though possibly not "short." For that matter the general level of the pioneer life may well have been lower than that, in present times, of the city's very poor. For these, in spite of the grinding conditions of present-day industry, have a certain choice of occupation, a certain variety of companionship and interest. Their life can hardly be so lacking in stimulus and opportunity for thought. It must be remembered that the early life of the wilderness was no vacation camping-trip of an over-stimulated city-man, seeking leisure and opportunity for thought. For any free flight of the imagination there was neither leisure nor stimulus. It is true that a few men of genuine intellectual power rose out of those conditions; but we have only to remember the struggles (*e.g.*, of Lincoln) to obtain the rudiments of an education to appreciate how far the conditions were in general those of spiritual bondage.

The freedom of the conscious agent — freedom to choose and to realize his personal ends — demands, then, the complex arrangements of the social order. It consists, not in the absence of social relations, but in their perfect adjustment. And the finer, the richer, the more flexible the adjustment, the greater the range of freedom. Even the strongest man is freer when he comes to terms with the crowd. The best shot in the early mining camps was not free to plan a personal career. Freedom to follow a line of business presupposes first of all an established police-power; and then an established system of currency, of transportation, and of commercial law. Freedom to realize your aims in a learned profession presupposes well developed schools. Freedom to express your opinion demands, first, protection from the mob, and then, on a higher plane, an established convention of tolerance and fairness. And



so of freedom of social intercourse. It is a vulgar error to suppose that social freedom is specially characteristic of those who are ignorant of social forms. As a rule the so-called simple-minded person is the person most easily offended, and no conventions are so inflexible and intolerant as those of a small and remote town. The problem of making any considerable number of persons mutually agreeable, even in a physical sense, is one of no small complexity. For this purpose the conventions of polite society represent as a rule a convenient and well-conceived *modus vivendi*. Those who enjoy freedom of social intercourse on any extended scale are those who have mastered these conventions and can use them intelligently.

§ 154. I hold, then, that an individualist not only may be, but in logic must be, a thorough-going socialist. But the meaning of this statement must be taken in strict conformity with the definition that I have given of socialism. I have defined socialism as the view which stands for a comprehensive organization of society. And this I also conceive to embody the characteristic *motif* of socialistic theory, the motive which as a matter of history has differentiated this school of thought from the school of *laissez faire*. But to the term organization I can, for my part, attach but one meaning: *an organization is an organization of differences*. A social organization is an organization of individuals; and beyond the individuals there is no organization. And therefore it is false to say that in the organization of society the individual differences are to be "transcended" or destroyed. Individuality can never be transcended. In the measure of the individuality which is realized is to be found the measure of the reality of the social organization. An organization is an organization, it


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

fulfils its own meaning, only so far as, in a harmonious system, it gives free play to individual differences.

I think it fair to say that this aspect of social organization is not greatly emphasized in the socialism of the parties and the schools. Not that they leave it out of consideration, nor that they refuse to accept it as an end. But it is never the primary end, never even a coordinate end, but always subordinate: first the socialistic state, with its absolute control over the individual, and then, if at all, a consideration of individual rights. Nor is this communistic emphasis peculiar to the socialism formally so-called. It is the prominent element in most present programs of social reform. Their most familiar phrase is "the common good." More narrowly formulated, this common good will usually turn out to consist in "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," the interest of the masses as against the classes, of the majority as against the minority, of "society" as against the individual. All of this rests upon an arithmetic basis. In the competition for happiness "everybody is to count for one," no matter what kind of a one; burdens are to be "equalized" without asking to whom they belong; and the good of all, in the sense of the good which is the same for all, is to be one object of social organization. The implication of all this phraseology is that social organization is a progress toward a state of uniformity, in which the individual is to figure as an impersonal, numerical "one," holding just one share of stock in an impersonal common good.

Such a conception embodies, to my mind, the exact reverse of what is meant by social organization. And not only this, it reverses the order which organization has actually taken, or is taking, as a historical or present

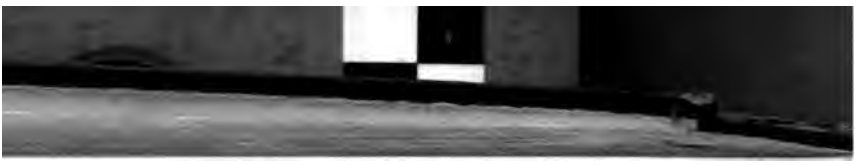


process. The ideal of "everybody to count for one" would appear to have been most completely realized in the communism of the primitive clan, where, indeed, nobody counted for any one in particular. Such a demand is today the characteristic chiefly of the more stupid and ignorant. It is the man of no culture to whom difference is personally offensive. The earliest awakening of social consciousness reveals the fact that everybody is a different one; and the progress of civilization has simply developed these differences. It has developed them in the very process of bringing them into more harmonious relations. No special optimism is required to see that this is as true today as ever. As I have remarked earlier, the institution of property is the clearest case of such differentiation. It is the most objective expression of the idea that good is an individual fact. And this idea is also the ground, at bottom, upon which certain forms of property are at present subjected to criticism. The real objection is that the facts of distribution fail to realize the distributive idea. There can be no doubt that we need a revision in many directions. But if this is to mark an advance in social organization, it must be based, not upon any obscure and impersonal "common good," but upon a finer and more accurate analysis of mutual relations and individual deserts.

§ 155. I should like to be able to supplement these general principles with a suggestion of a concrete program, but this would lead me into fields of special investigation where, as a layman, I have hardly the right to speak. Yet, within my rights as a layman, I may venture perhaps to offer one or two illustrations to mark the difference between the enforcement of uniformity and an organization for freedom. The


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

last few years have witnessed the passage of a number of "pure-food" laws. To many — some who were concerned for the safety of democratic institutions, others for the privilege of selling adulterated goods — such laws have seemed dangerously "socialistic." And of course they are dangerous; just as automobiles and aeroplanes are dangerous until knowledge and responsibility become commensurate with their demands. But what is to be noted by us is that laws of this kind are radically different in principle from the sumptuary laws of former times or the present tariff laws, or, in particular, the laws governing the sale of intoxicating liquors. For their chief aim is not to prescribe what may be manufactured and sold, but simply how it shall be labelled. The man who has covered his griddle-cakes with "Vermont Maple Syrup" may still, if he likes, and perhaps quite reasonably, indulge in "Vermont Syrup, made from the Best Cane Sugar"; only now he is brought face to face with the truth. And in the truth, here as everywhere else, there is freedom; for the consumer, who can now choose what he will buy and eat; for the honest dealer, who can now expect to get an appropriate return for genuine goods; for every one but the dishonest manufacturer who is unable to compete except by misrepresentation, and whose freedom is *ex hypothesi* not to be considered.. And in this revelation of the truth there is realized the most natural and most inalienable of all natural rights, namely, the right to know. It makes no difference whether whiskey obtained by one process is as good, or as bad, as that obtained by another. This is to be settled by the man who drinks whiskey, at least not by the man who makes it. But in any case he who drinks whiskey has a sacred right to know what he drinks.



Nor, in this enforced publication of the truth, is there anything new, or revolutionary, or "undemocratic." Rather the reverse. The most fundamental condition of democratic government, a condition directly implied in "the consent of the governed," is that the governed shall have exact knowledge of their situation. Our appreciation of the worth of this condition, and of the tremendous power which it confers, is expressed in the demand for the freedom of the press. It is precisely in accord with the idea of democratic government that it should define the standards of commerce. The government has always defined the standard of money, and almost its strictest and severest laws are those against counterfeiting. No one would deny that upon the right performance of this function rests the whole freedom of commerce. Until recently there has been no necessity for a similar standard for goods. When your butcher lives down the street and kills, and perhaps grows, his own cattle, and when, moreover, neither of you suspects the possibility of tuberculosis, freedom of commerce is secured through personal acquaintance. The extension of commerce has made it clear that freedom must now be secured through the application of governmental standards; the development of knowledge has shown that these standards must be defined and administered with scientific intelligence; and in the successful execution of such a program we may hope to enjoy a greater freedom than before. Precisely this is true, however, for every line of trade. From the standpoint of freedom of commerce, pure wool and pure linen stand quite as much in need of definition as pure food; and similar definitions would be useful for machinery and furniture. In fact, we shall only then enjoy a final freedom of commerce when every article


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

offered for sale is accompanied by an authoritative description based upon an intelligent standard for defining the various grades and kinds in that line of goods.

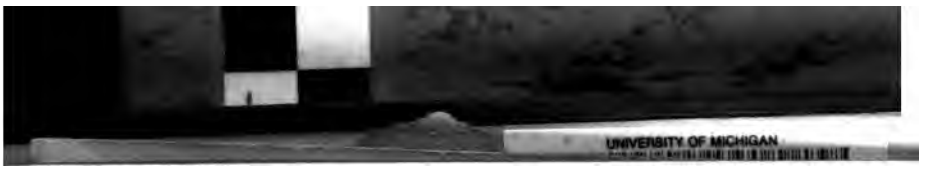
§ 156. For some time past we have been engaged in an effort to regulate the rates of transportation. I am aware that the problem of rate-making is one of enormous complexity, and I therefore hesitate to touch it. But I think that even a moral philosopher might hope to understand the general principle of rate-adjustment, and in particular to learn whether it is a principle of justice or of brotherly love. So far as one may learn from general discussion it would seem that the principle is not yet clearly defined. On the one hand there is a demand for an apportionment of rate to service, — so that each community may enjoy the advantages, or bear the disadvantages, of its distance from the markets. On the other hand there is a tendency to treat the state-control of railways as a means for "equalizing the burden," of modifying the disadvantages of remote localities by subtracting somewhat from the advantages of the nearer, or of modifying the disadvantages of the weight of one kind of goods, such as coal, by imputing an artificial weight — or bulk, or other rate-factor — to hats.

It is hardly necessary to point out which conception of rate-control is an organization for freedom, or which, again, is in the communistic sense "socialistic." Apportionment of rate to service represents, it seems to me, a definite principle; and a just principle, whose significance is not destroyed by the difficulties of a perfectly exact definition. I recognize the difficulties, but it seems to me that they are not different in kind from those involved in other apportionments of responsi-



bilities, in which, nevertheless, we are able to reach an approximately satisfactory result. Such a principle means, first, that the man who, dissatisfied with the conditions of life borne by his neighbors, buys land or sets up in business in another place, assumes the responsibilities of his choice; secondly, that he is not deprived of the profits of an intelligent choice, or of an intelligently constructive enterprise, by arbitrary legislation. In other words, the principle here is the same as that involved in pure food. We forbid the poor grocer to mix his olive oil with cotton-seed; we forbid the unfortunate citizen to put brass into his dollar; on what ground should we stamp an inaccessible place "accessible"? And here again freedom of exchange is furthered by a scientific determination of the truth. It should not be forgotten that in these days freight-charges have become a nearly universal ingredient of market-values, and therefore that an established standard of rates is now nearly as important as an established currency. How, then, does a *fiat*-rate differ from a *fiat*-dollar? "Equalizing the burden" furnishes no definite principle. What it really amounts to is a scheme for determining the rate of freight on the principle of brotherly love. It proposes in a general way that we should bear one another's burdens, but when it comes to the point, as in the case of other applications of the fraternal principle, it is unable to state even a rule for determining how much of the burden should be borne by each.

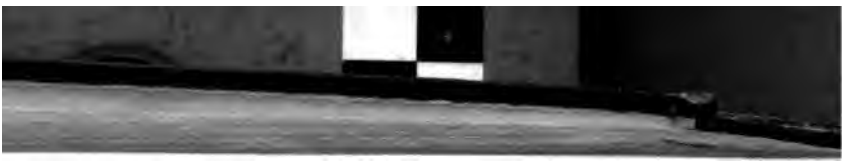
Here, of course, I shall encounter the objection that, in the matter of rates, the question of justice *versus* brotherly love is irrelevant; that the determination of rates is a matter, not of ethics, but of economics; and that in economics the principle of rate-determination is settled and established. Says Professor Logan G.


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

McPherson,[10] "Much as the principles underlying the transportation charge have been discussed, all writers of recognized authority agree that the proper basis is what the traffic will bear." As if the *proper* basis for rates could ever be a question of authority! But, this aside, I maintain that "what the traffic will bear" is not, properly speaking, an intelligent principle, as shown very clearly by the argument of the chapter in which the above statement appears. The main purpose of this argument is to show that a calculation of the ingredients that enter into the cost of a given service is too complicated to be undertaken; (it does not explicitly affirm that these factors, if determinable, could be disregarded); and *therefore* that the only thing to do is to charge what the traffic will bear. Now I will not deny that this may be an expedient rule. Under the present conditions of ignorance it may be the only possible rule. But a rule based upon ignorance and immediate necessity is very far from being an intelligent principle. That is to say, it is not a principle which by its logical character is fitted to express the intentions of an intelligent man; or, as the case may be, of an intelligent community.

And really, taken in itself, "what the traffic will bear" is quite without meaning. For, after all, what will the traffic bear? That, you will perceive, must depend somewhat upon what the traffic conceives itself to be bearing. As long as the hatter is not distinctly aware that his rate of freight is swollen to meet the cost of carrying coal he may bear it. When the point is made clear he will no longer bear it so easily. The whole meaning of the present agitation is that the people at large are becoming aware of what they are

[10] *Railroad Freight Rates* (New York, 1909), p. 230.



bearing and are therefore raising the question of why they should bear it. It is no sufficient reply to show them that they do bear it. A really intelligent reply will require an analysis of the whole situation, including those elements of cost which Professor McPherson declares to be indeterminable. This is not to say that cost is the final determinant. It does say, however, that in a situation once brought to consciousness, cost, like every other aspect, is bound to be considered. And this is specially true of the case before us. It is all very well to say to a customer, "This is the price of the service. Take it or leave it. The cost is none of your affair." This presupposes a customer unable to compel an answer to his question. Give him the power of cross-examination, and almost his first question will be that relating to cost. In any case he is bound to take up the matter from an ethical point of view.

So, I say, the ethical question is distinctly relevant; and this in spite of the difficulty of securing a satisfactory answer. Such a question is involved necessarily in the conception of rate-making or rate-paying as a self-conscious and intelligent process. And this consideration, as I have suggested before, is applicable to economic principles generally. The independence of ethical considerations attributed to economic laws presupposes that the operation of the laws is unconscious. An economic law become self-conscious is thereby compelled to take issue with ethical principles, and thereafter to justify itself upon ethical grounds. As an impersonal natural law it will no longer work.

§ 157. The principle of justice requires, then, that, in the matter of rates of freight, as in other matters, every man should bear his own burden. Now it is quite possible, of course, that the application of the


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

individualistic principle may itself dictate the temporary assumption of the burdens of weaker communities. It may in certain cases be profitable for all concerned to offer special inducements for the settlement of newer lands. The point that I should make here, however, is that, in a scientific organization of society upon individualistic principles, the nature and extent of such concessions would be clearly defined and temporally limited, and they would never be hidden under the guise of an ordinary rate of freight. And this leads me to a final remark in this connection. It may seem an anti-climax to close a discussion of individualism and socialism with a homily upon the importance of accurate book-keeping as a matter of public policy. Yet you will readily see that careful distinction of accounts on the public ledger is the first condition of a self-conscious national life. And this national self-consciousness is the very foundation of democratic institutions. Upon this depends both their efficiency, from the standpoint of administration, and their guarantee of freedom.

The primary condition of freedom is that the citizen in casting his vote shall know what he means. I doubt if there is any constitutional government under which this is less the case than our own. The expenses of our postal system are partly for the carriage of mail; partly for the prevention of swindling and the protection of private morals; mainly, however, it would seem, for the encouragement of cheap periodical literature. Further, it is to be noted that the postal department carries the government mail free (including the private mail of members of Congress) and at the same time receives a subsidy. Under the conditions no man alive can say what this subsidy represents, or whether the postal system is, from a business point of view, an

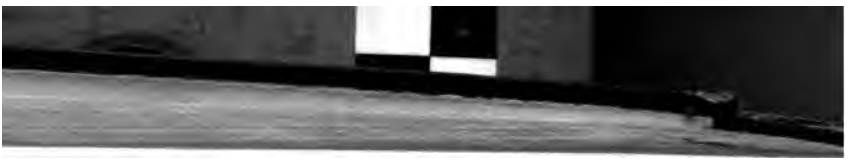


efficient institution. Under our tariff system a man contributes toward a battleship while under the impression that he is only buying a coat. He pays a high rate of freight upon certain goods, presumably for transportation, mostly, if for any definite reason, for insurance. His "flat rate" for water, where the water is supplied by the municipality, pays as a rule not merely for the water consumed by himself, but for that used on the streets and in the public buildings, and perhaps for some contributed to his neighbor for the encouragement of cleanliness; I have known it to represent a subsidy to local industry. It is quite in line with all this to have a national Supreme Court whose function, under the guise of interpretation, is to amend the constitution from time to time to meet changing conditions. "The beauty of the system is its flexibility." Such "flexibility," however, is a mere euphemism for civic irresponsibility. What it amounts to is that, with the infinite possibility of doing one thing in the name of another, we pass through and contribute to important changes in the social order of which we are never really conscious. The issue is not made clear. The outcome is not really chosen. And so far our government is not in any real sense a government by the people.

Just at present we are entering upon a career of state and municipal enterprise. As noted before, society has no more right than the individual to base its action upon arbitrary grounds. The simple statement, "It is so ordered," is no sufficient justification of a municipal enterprise; it must show that, as against any private enterprise, it can more profitably meet the demands of the situation. But it can never show this as long as public and private service, and the several kinds of public service, remain undistinguished. And if these


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ends are to be properly distinguished, public enterprise must adopt as far as possible the point of view of the private *entrepreneur*, treating its employees as ordinary wage-earners and the municipality or the state as one of its several customers. In other words, it must be an individual among individuals. This *quasi*-individuality involves no artificial distinction; it is simply the kind of distinction implied necessarily in a higher and more self-conscious social organization.



IV The Logic of the Social Problem

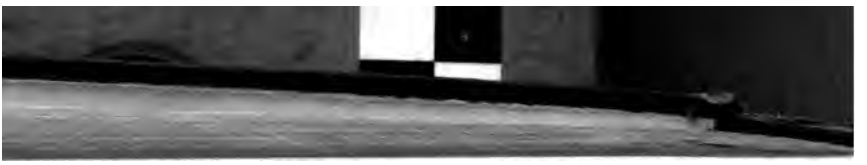
§ 158. And now a few concluding remarks upon the relation of these views to the problems of actual life. It is possible that the total result of my argument will be to raise the following general question: "You have shown (let us assume) that a society of conscious beings will, in consequence of their self-consciousness, combine a perfect individual freedom with a perfect cooperative adjustment. But who is the conscious being? By your own admission no human being, no most intelligent human being, is more than half-conscious. The only really self-conscious beings, if any there be, are the gods. Accordingly, for them, and for them alone, is reserved the perfect harmony of individual good and social welfare. It may be that in ages to come men themselves will be gods. But for us who now are — and according to you we are first to be considered — any perfect harmony of interests is indefinitely remote. Of what value, then, is a theory of the social relations of perfectly self-conscious beings? Would it not be more to the point to define a principle of compromise for disposing of the difficulties that arise from our present imperfectly conscious state?"

This, however, I should reply, is what I am directly attempting to do. It must be remembered that in an unconscious situation no compromise is either called for or possible. The adjustments of unconscious beings are provided for, and at the same time rigidly determined, by the "laws of nature," — gravitation, survival of the fittest, supply and demand. Responsibility for effecting a compromise implies the introduction into the situation of an idea, of a purpose to be realized.


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

But this alters our view of the whole situation. We are tempted to conceive our practical program as a tabulated system of expedients for applying given ideas to given sets of conditions. But the truth is that a mere description of the conditions will depend upon the meaning of the ideas. The trunk of a tree, for example. It is not "wood," and will never be such, apart from the presence of human purpose. So of the social situation. Any problem of social adjustment, conceived even as a matter of compromise, implies the possibility of re-adjusting economic conditions according to a social idea. But the idea will be implied in a mere statement of the conditions. And the question is, What idea?

To my mind this is the first question, even for purposes of compromise. For there may be compromise and compromise. And infinite degrees of compromise. One compromise barely misses a perfect logical solution, another is almost meaningless. But whether a given compromise shall be one or the other, and how far, will depend upon the clearness of the guiding idea. For no purpose of life can the idea be too clearly stated. In most of our colleges there is a marking-system, according to which a student's work is graded A, B, C, etc., upon a basis of percentage. No teacher can of course with perfect conviction decide that (*e.g.*) an interpretation of Plato's "Republic" is 85 per cent good. Yet he will find that the more definitely he attempts to state the meaning of "85 per cent good" as applied to such cases, the more satisfied he will be that his grades express that proportionality of merit which the marking system calls for. So of the social problem. The problem of social relations is the problem of adjusting the ends of intelligent beings. What is the *modus operandi* of intelligence? What social relations are



implied in the idea of intelligent beings? In a problem involving these questions no analysis can be too searching, or too remote to be relevant to the immediate issue. And upon the clearness of the resulting idea will depend the extent to which our social order is a solution or an illogical compromise. Even though we learn that the only perfectly intelligent beings are the gods, that too will be relevant; for in the measure in which we grasp the meaning of that, we too shall be gods and shall establish the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

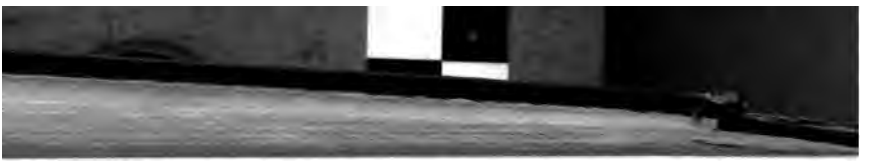
§ 159. And so, what is the idea? The idea, namely, of intelligent social relations? The answer to this question will be a final summary and repetition of the main points of our doctrine. First, the idea of the social good: *the social good is not a common good, but first, last, and always a mutual and distributive good.* And here let us take a final glance at the common good. According to my view the common good represents the most illogical of all compromises. It is that compromise which expresses the minimum of social idea. In other words, it is the expression, not of our social consciousness, but of our social unconsciousness. It is a kind of notion that never occurs to us where the distributive relations are reasonably clear. For example, it would be thought a grotesque idea if a railroad, hauling from the same mine to the same town, five cars of coal to one dealer and one car to another, should charge each with the freight for three cars "for the common good." Yet this is precisely what is implied in the idea. "Everybody to count for one and nobody for more than one," — leave this out and the common good loses its last vestige of meaning.

In the political economy based upon the older industrial *régime* the common good is little in evidence.


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The older economists found their way into the subject from the standpoint of an exceedingly small and isolated village-community consisting of half a dozen hunters or fishermen. This was supposed to represent an elementary economic group. One of this number conceived the idea of staying at home and making canoes or bows and arrows in exchange for fish and game. Hence, the institution of commerce. Here, however, the distributive relations are reasonably clear. Nothing was involved beyond the immediate group, and within the group the individual contribution could be easily estimated. Hence, there was no occasion for reference to a common good or to an undistributed "social product"; for clearly every product was an individual product. All is changed, however, when from this primitive situation we turn to the economic situation of today. The relation of exchange involves now, not a bare half dozen, but millions upon millions. The problem of determining even the general facts about mutual relations is thus appallingly complex. How are these individual accounts to be adjusted and balanced? At this juncture appears "the common good" with a short and easy method. The book-keeper who finds himself in difficulty over a bill of expense may dispose of the matter by charging it all to "General Expenses," "Sundries," or "Profit and Loss." Why not open a general-expense account on the social ledger? Then, whatever good cannot be clearly located in an individual may be charged, or credited, to the common good, and any product for which the responsibility is not clear may be called "the product of social activity."

Such I conceive to be the natural history of the conception of the common good. So interpreted, it is the expression of ignorance, of ignorance more or less



inevitable, but still of ignorance. And it presupposes the logic of ignorance, the maxim of which is that quantities not clearly conceived must be conceived to be equal. And this again, it is not irrelevant to note, is the principle of the so-called logic of chance and theory of probabilities. Heads or tails? The chances, we say, are equal. But this stands for practically little more than a complete ignorance of the determining conditions, — that is to say, a complete absence of ground for saying one thing or the other. Really, of course, the possibilities are never equal; when the penny is once in the air its fall is absolutely determined. Now the common good is but one of the expressions of this logic of chance. We should hardly make use of the conception where the distributive relations were known. If you were dining Jack Spratt and his wife it would never occur to you to make a common distribution of fat and lean. But when you are carving for Mr. and Mrs. X, who modestly refuse to express a preference for light or dark, you serve each with some light and some dark on the principle that "the chances are equal."

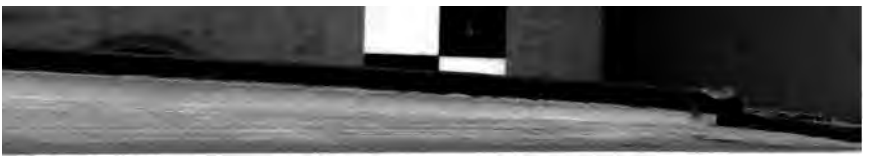
The logic of the common good is, therefore, the logic of ignorance. And humanly speaking, this ignorance is more or less inevitable. Certainly I have no wish to underestimate the complexity of economic problems or to suggest a lack of respect for economic thought. All that I wish to point out is that, whatever the obscurity of the situation, it makes all the difference in the world whether you approach it with the right idea; which in the present case I hold to be the distributive idea. No good in the world is an absolutely common good. No human product is the product of a purely "social" activity. Each individual in the social world, like each atom in the physical world, makes a difference, and,


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

because he is a conscious being, an individual difference. These differences are never absolutely obscure. No object which is even felt is absolutely opaque. *No good, once critically examined, is indistinguishably "common."* Our aim as conscious beings is to make the social organization express these differences. How far we shall do so will depend upon how far we keep in mind the distinctively social idea.

§ 160. Secondly, the idea of the social problem. According to the view expressed here *the social problem is a practical problem;* in other words, *a technological problem.* That is to say, it is not a sentimental, or a homiletical, or even an "educational" problem; not a problem of stimulating a "consciousness of kind," or of cultivating a disposition toward altruism or self-sacrifice, or a feeling of brotherly love, or even of developing "a habit of looking at all things from a social point of view." What the social problem calls for is not a change of heart, but a change of conditions. Any improvement of conditions must, indeed, be the expression of an enlarged intelligence and a more comprehensive mutual understanding; and thus, indeed, of a spiritual change. But the very nature of such a change, as defined by us, forbids that we should entertain for a moment the idea of solution by self-sacrifice; of striving for self-forgetfulness and contentment in the common good. According to us the growth of the spirit is in the direction, not of self-forgetfulness, but of self-assertion. Our aim is not to make the common good our own, but to make our own good a social possibility.

A problem which seeks this result is a problem of technical analysis and adjustment. As I have pointed out earlier, the logic of the social problem is the same as that of a problem of mechanical invention. No



problem of invention is a question of securing a single simple result, but of securing this *and* that — *e.g.*, speed and safety — and combining the two ends with artistic perfection and completeness. What the inventor seeks is first of all a statement of the ends to be combined. The social problem requires of each person a frank and intelligent statement of what he wants. It may be that clearness and certainty of self-assertion will be reached only through a process of trial and error, — the same is true of course in mechanical invention. And in the meantime we must endure (not be contented with) an imperfect compromise. But to the extent that we approach the problem with a clear idea of its nature and of the methodology involved in its solution, the waste of trial and error will be minimized and the compromise will be transformed in the direction of a logical solution.

§ 161. Third and last, then, the idea of individual duty. Under existing conditions what is the obligation of the individual with regard to a given social enterprise? In our Third Lecture it has been pointed out that all obligation, including moral and social obligation, must be justified by self-interest; yet that an intelligently self-regarding person will be, in the last analysis, a profitable member of society, and conversely. But the question remains how these criteria are to applied. For it is obvious that, under human conditions, we never reach the last analysis. As the situation presents itself, there are cases where a response to the demands of society is clearly to my own interest, other cases where it would be clearly to my loss; in these cases the application of the individualistic principle is perfectly clear. But there is a third class of cases, and perhaps the largest class, which are not clear one


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

way or the other. What of the stranger who appears at my door with a demand that calls for considerable attention and outlay? May I confidently expect to have entertained "an angel unawares"? Or suppose that, as a university professor, I am requested by the university authorities to devote a considerable amount of extra time and attention to some object in which I am not personally interested? Shall I recklessly cast my bread upon the waters confident that it will return? Or shall I adopt the policy that what is not clearly in furtherance of my personal interests shall receive no attention?

To these questions the reply must be, so far as a reply may be given, that *individual duty is a matter of enlightened self-interest.* In other words, the problem of individual duty, like that of social adjustment, is a practical and technological problem. And this means that, while no rules can be offered for dealing with particular cases, the *idea* to be applied to them, for determining the risks to be accepted or refused, is the same idea that would be applied to any other problem where the end in view was self-interest. Suppose you were called upon to advise a young man entering business. Would you counsel him to take up every offer that presented even the remotest suggestion of profit? Or to confine himself to those enterprises in which the profit were certain and clear? Obviously neither. In the first case his capital would soon be dissipated; in the second case his business activity would be confined within a small and narrow field. Or suppose it were a question of what to read. You would never advise a man to read any book in which he might conceivably become interested, nor yet to confine his reading within the lines of his established tastes. The same kind of



situation is presented by the moral problem. Here too our capital is more or less limited. The possibilities of attention forbid that our sympathies be extended indefinitely. If we extend our social relations too far, the result is dissipation and extravagance and nothing of solid value either for us or for our fellows. On the other hand, if we confine them within the field of the certainly profitable, we become narrow and mean, and in refusing to come to terms with others we miss the possibilities of life for ourselves. Granting that the good for me must be a good finally for self I am not therefore justified in maintaining an ultra-conservative self nor yet in giving free rein to an extravagantly liberal self. Somewhere between meanness and extravagance there lies, as Aristotle points out, a middle ground of generosity within which my real good lies. To keep this in mind is a policy of enlightened practical wisdom. Yet, as a matter of practical policy, you would never advise a man simply to keep within a vaguely middle ground. As I have said before, no situation which you approach with an idea is ever absolutely opaque. The idea of moral obligation is that of a mutually profitable enterprise. The considerations involved in any final calculation of profit, when the term is used in the larger sense, are complicated in the extreme. But the situation is never quite formless when the meaning of obligation is kept clearly in mind. When this is done the middle ground begins to develop distinctions and relations and the compromise is altered in the direction of a more exact coordination.

§ 162. And so the idea of individual duty is that of social intercourse measured and controlled. Yet once again I wish to point out that there is nothing in our individualism which is not in idea generous and humane.


UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Individualism stands for personal freedom. But our very demand for freedom is a demand to live on terms of conscious fellowship in a world richly peopled with free beings such as we ourselves aim to be. Where you or I have failed to come to terms with our fellows our lives are incomplete and our selves remain to that extent unrealized and unexpressed. And if any of our fellows is unfit for the life of free social intercourse, then, for us too, the world is so far poorer. No man of common intelligence can find a satisfaction in the degradation of his fellows. No man of high intelligence can find the sight of it endurable. Nor would he deliberately elect to live in a social environment of which the distinction of "inferiors" were an essential part of the idea. But as the range of imagination is broadened through civilization and culture, the circle is constantly extended of those whose freedom and dignity are our intimate personal concern. So that, in the end, we may all say, with Kant, "*Es kann nichts entsetzlicher sein, als dass die Handlungen eines Menschen unter dem Willen eines anderen stehen sollen;*" no idea is more intolerable than that of the subjection of one will to another. All of this is implied in our individualism. And when I stand for a measured and controlled social intercourse it is not to exalt a narrowness of aim, but simply to recall to your consideration that this fellowship of free beings — this brotherly love, if you please — is not a fact but an ideal, not a condition but a theory, something not to be assumed but to be won; and to be won, again, not by an assumption of unity, but by a mutually intelligent self-assertion and adjustment of social relations.

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